



14

Domestic Girlfriend

KEI SASUGA

DOMESTIC

Domestic Girlfriend

14

D O M E
G I R L

KEI SASUGA

DOMESTIC GIRL

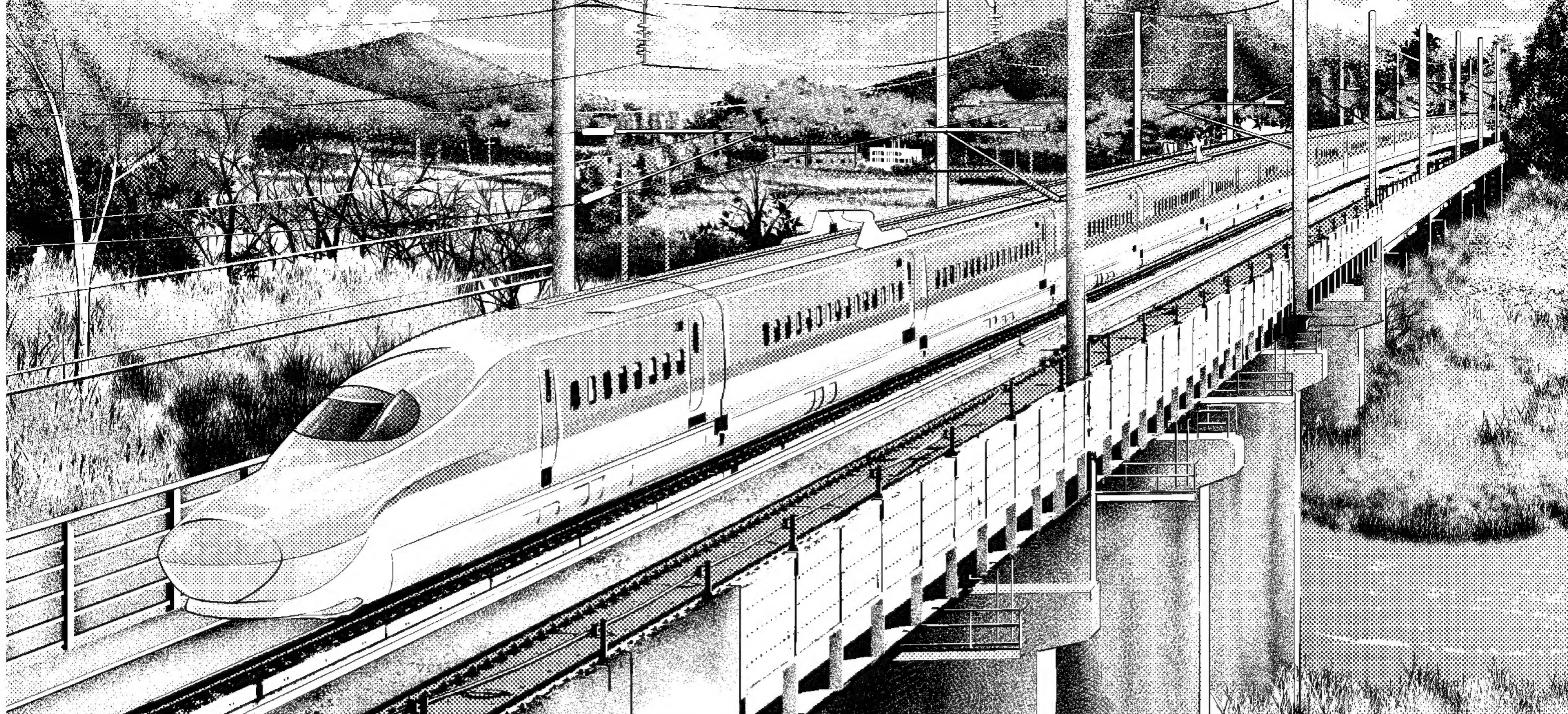
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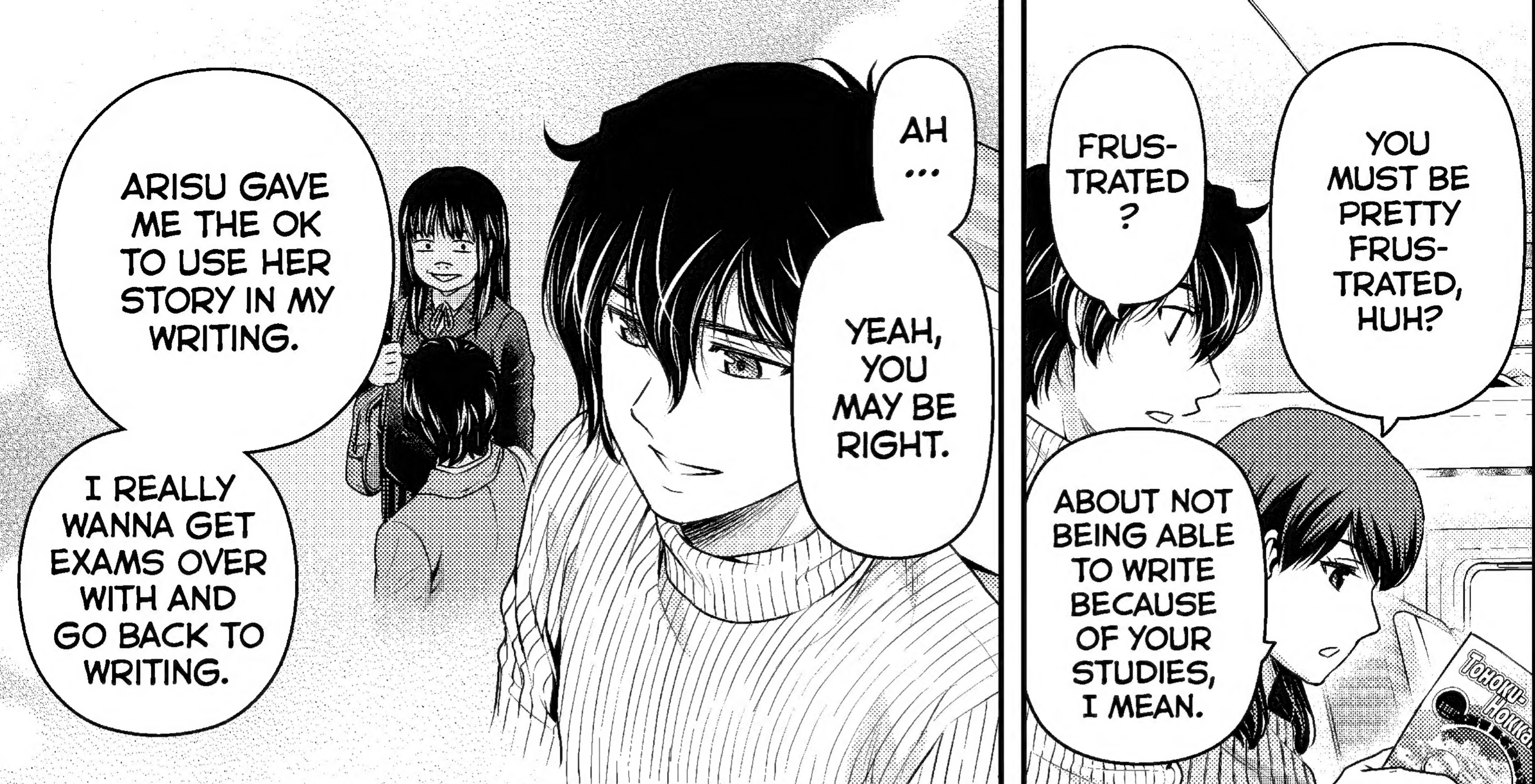
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CHAPTER 125: ALWAYS TOGETHER...







ARISU GAVE
ME THE OK
TO USE HER
STORY IN MY
WRITING.

I REALLY
WANNA GET
EXAMS OVER
WITH AND
GO BACK TO
WRITING.

AH
...
YEAH,
YOU
MAY BE
RIGHT.

FRUS-
TRATED
?

YOU
MUST BE
PRETTY
FRUS-
TRATED,
HUH?

ABOUT NOT
BEING ABLE
TO WRITE
BECAUSE
OF YOUR
STUDIES,
I MEAN.



HEY.

AREN'T
YOU
GONNA
WRITE
ABOUT
ME?

I'VE
ALREADY
GOT A
TITLE IN
MIND,
TOO.

HMM.



REALLY
?!

YEAH.
IT'LL BE A
RAUNCHY
EROTIC
NOVEL.

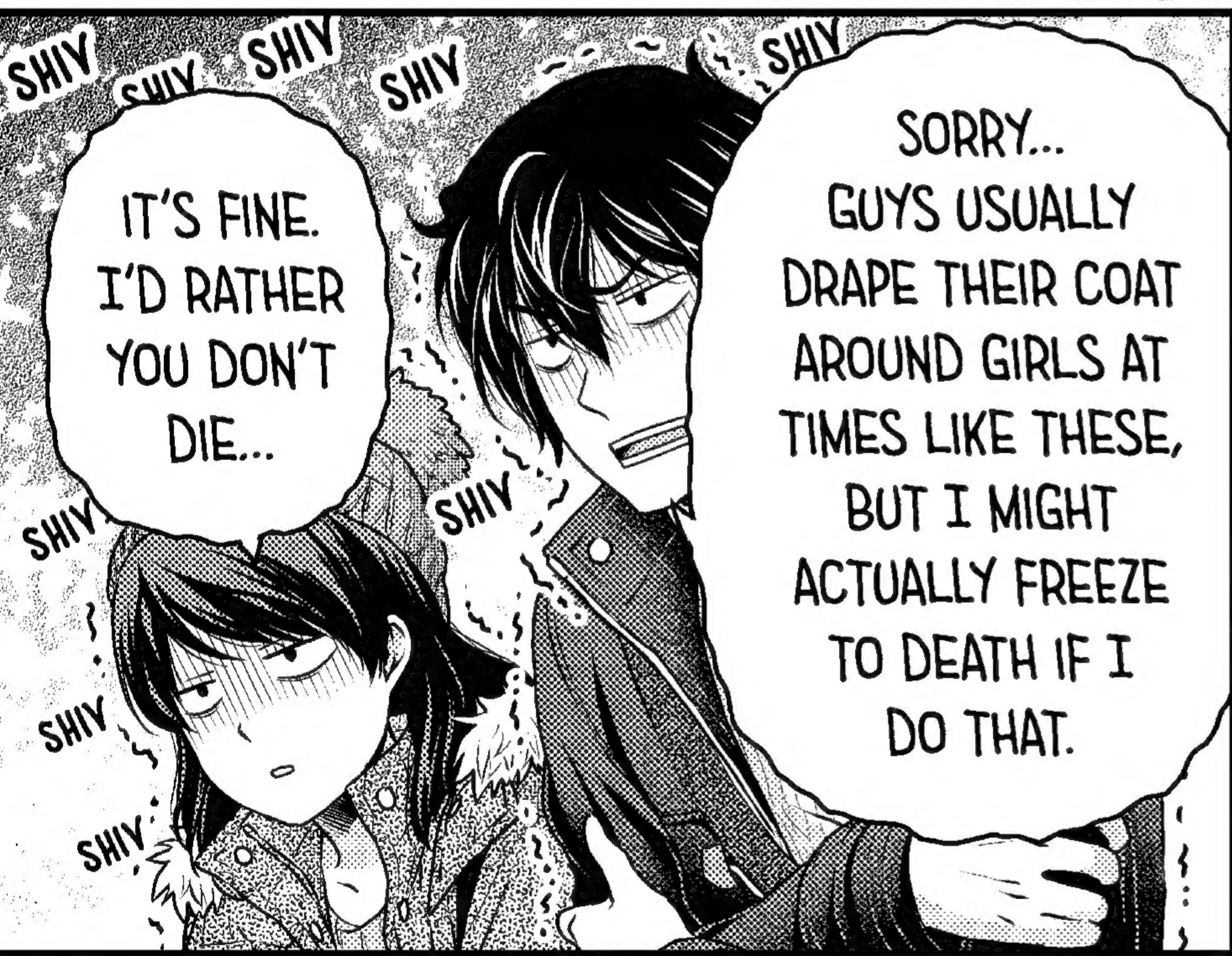
OH.

SURE,
I WILL.

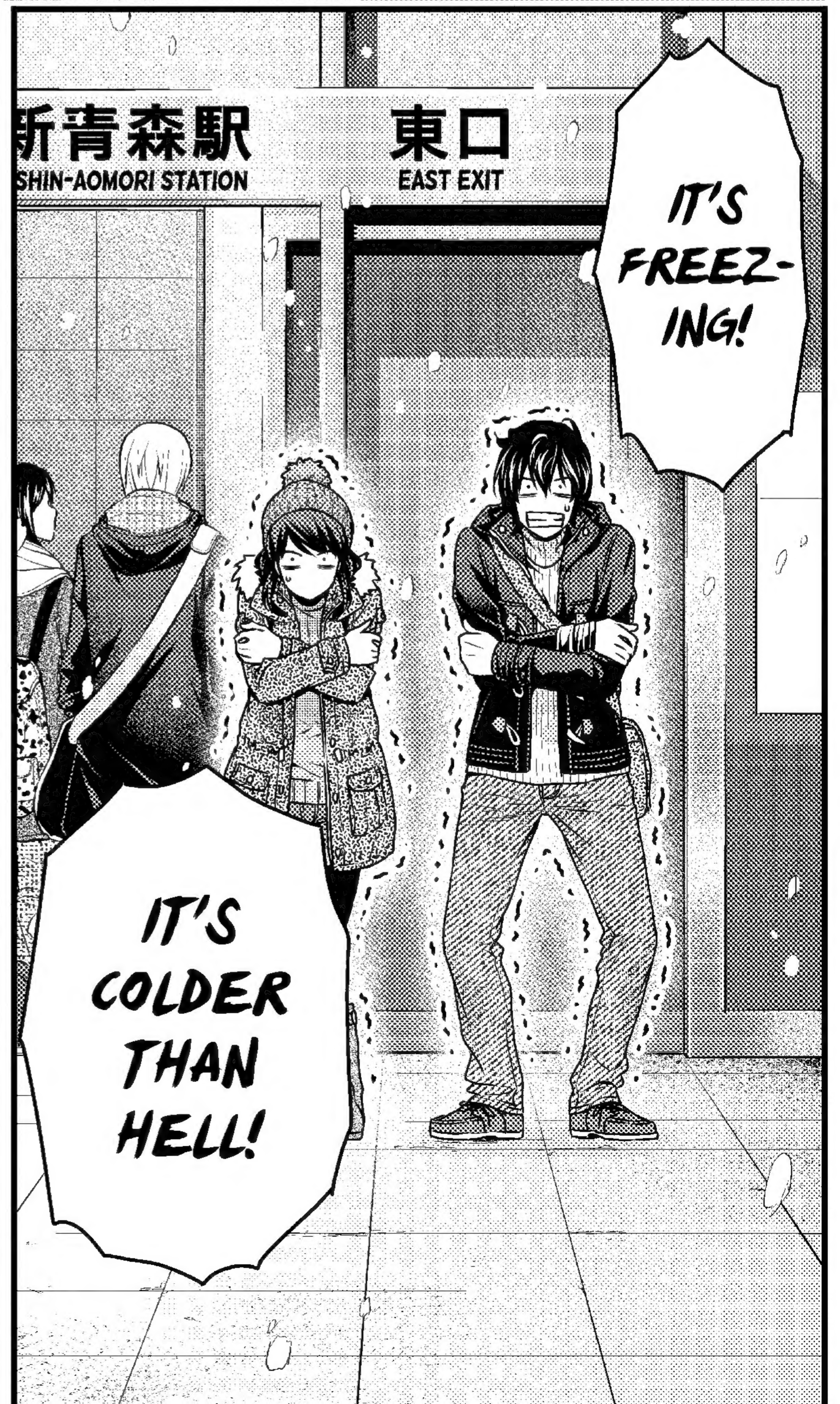
THERE WAS
THE ONE YOU
WROTE A WHILE
AGO TO SORT
OUT YOUR
FEELINGS, BUT
I REALIZED
YOU HAVEN'T
USED ME IN A
FULL STORY.

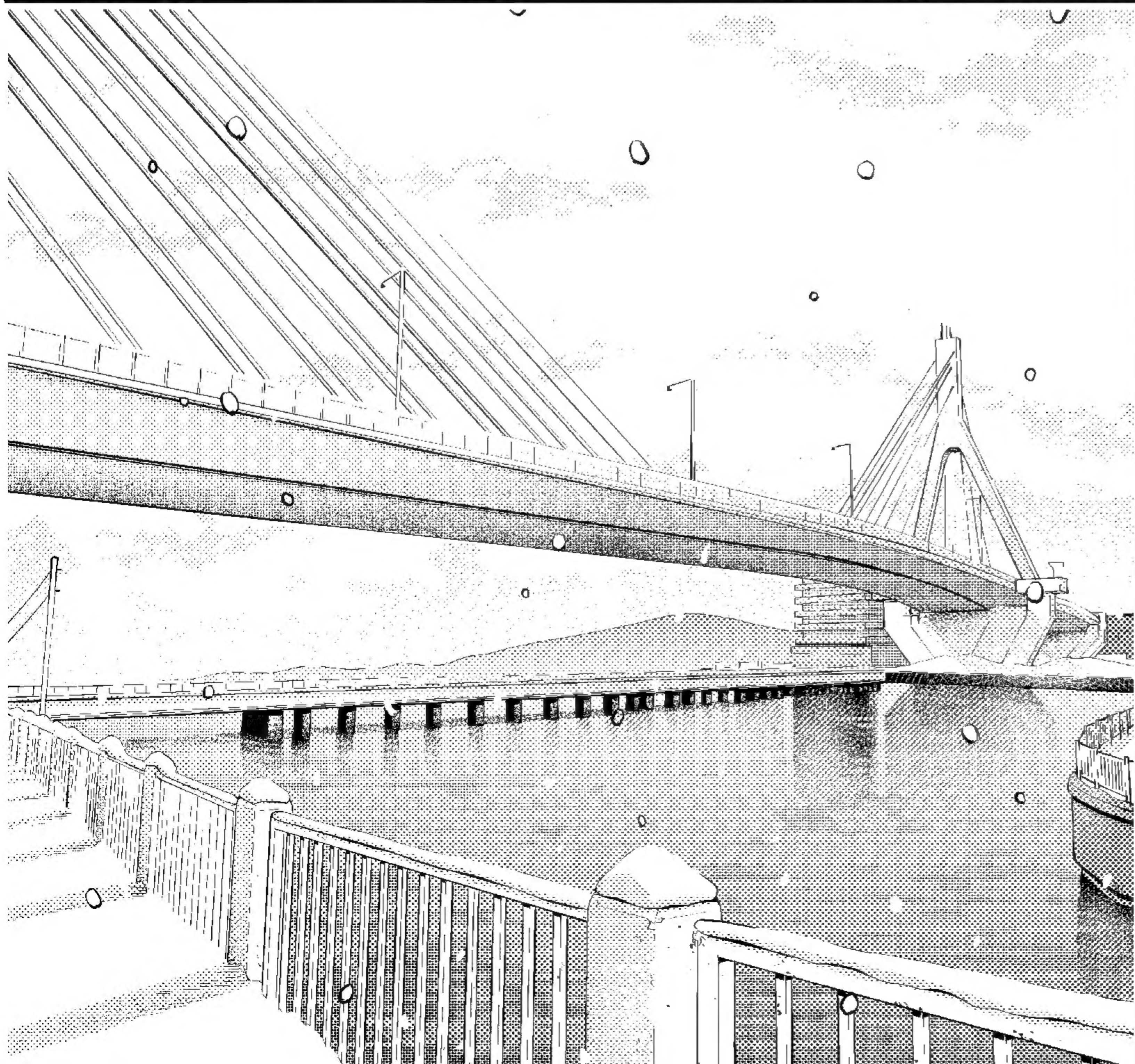
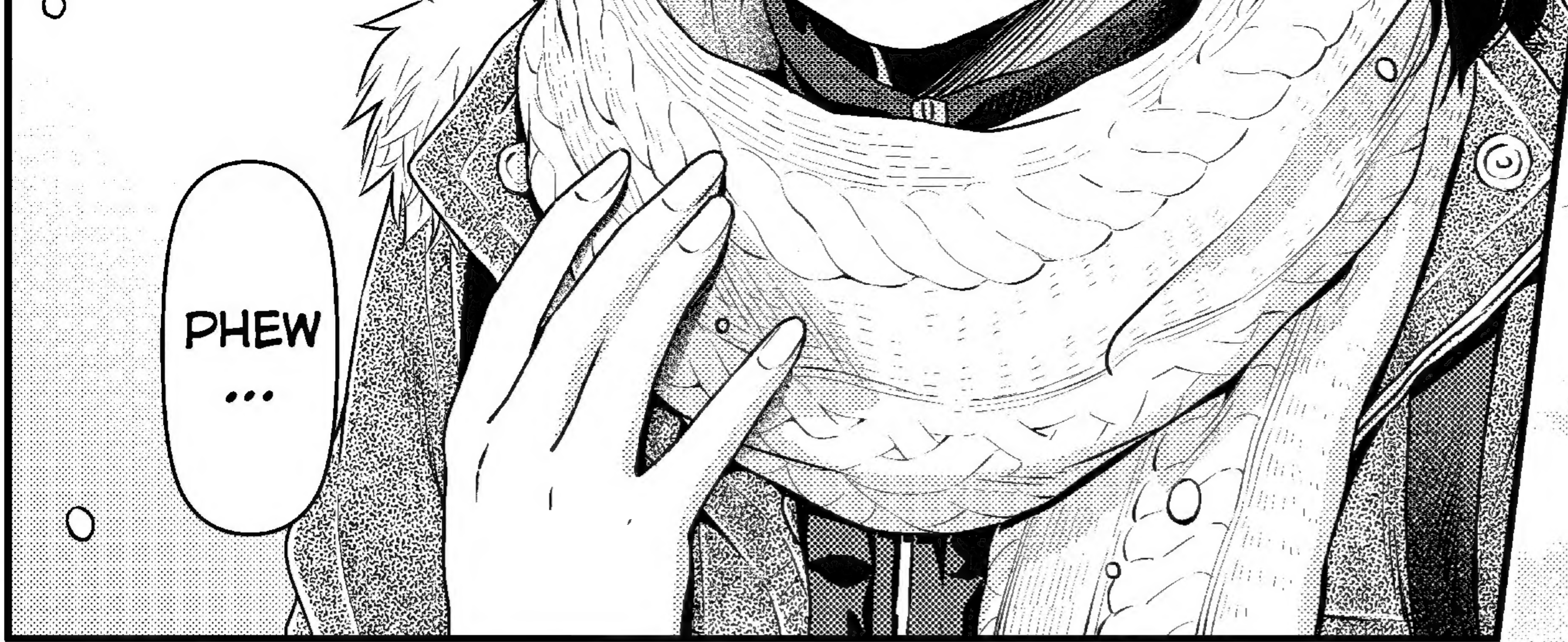
HUH
?

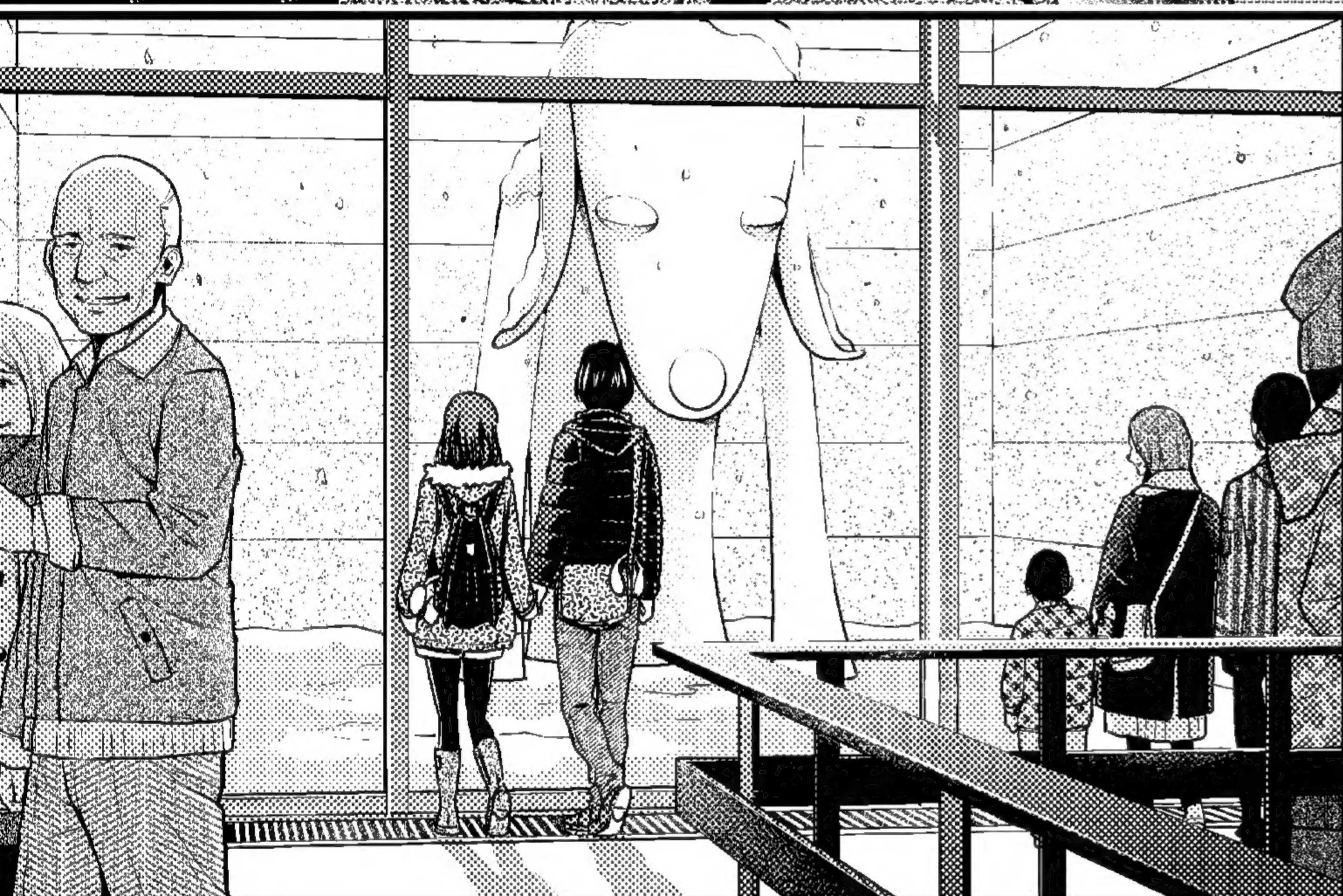


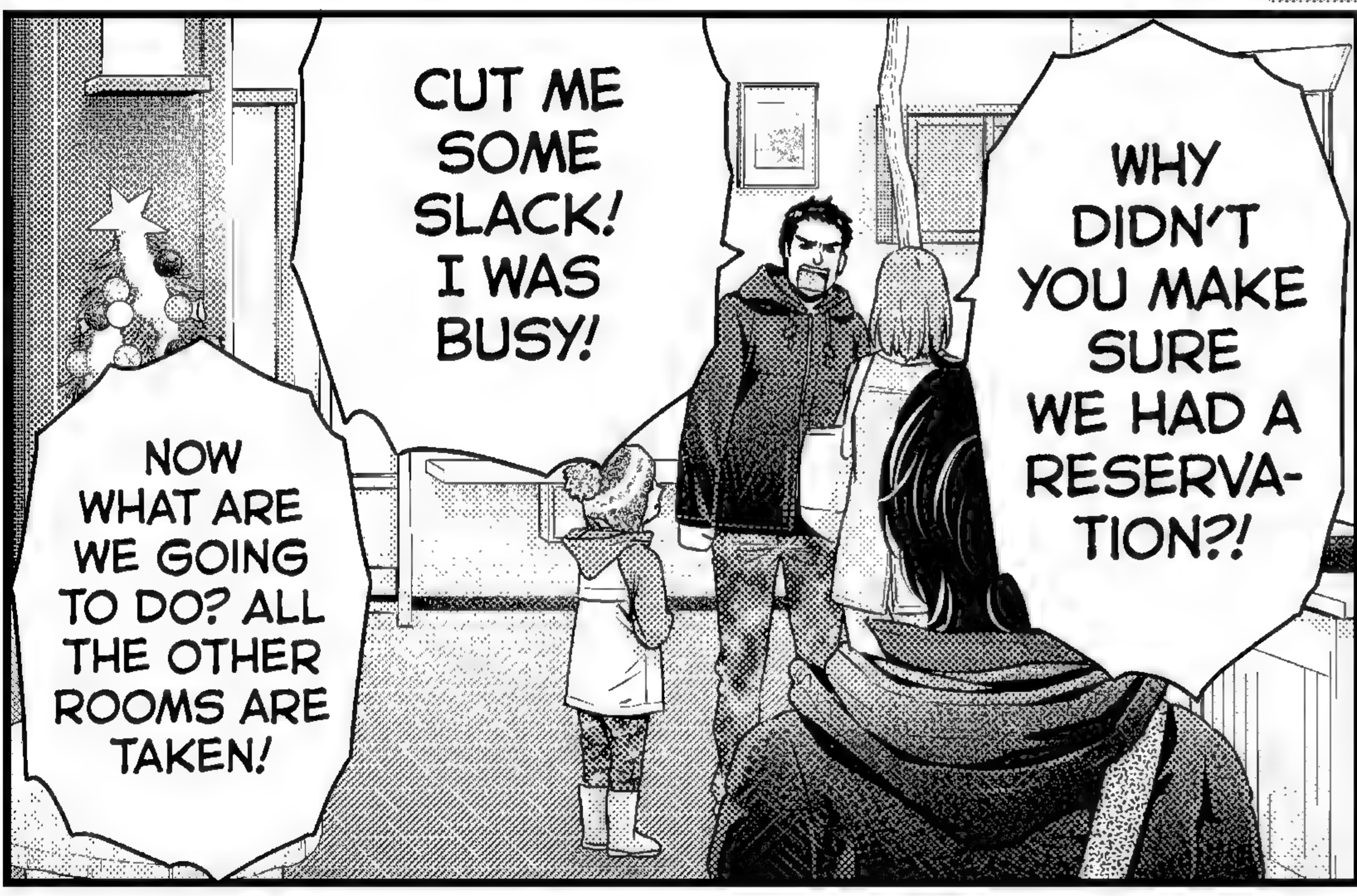


*A POPULAR CHAIN CLOTHING STORE IN JAPAN.







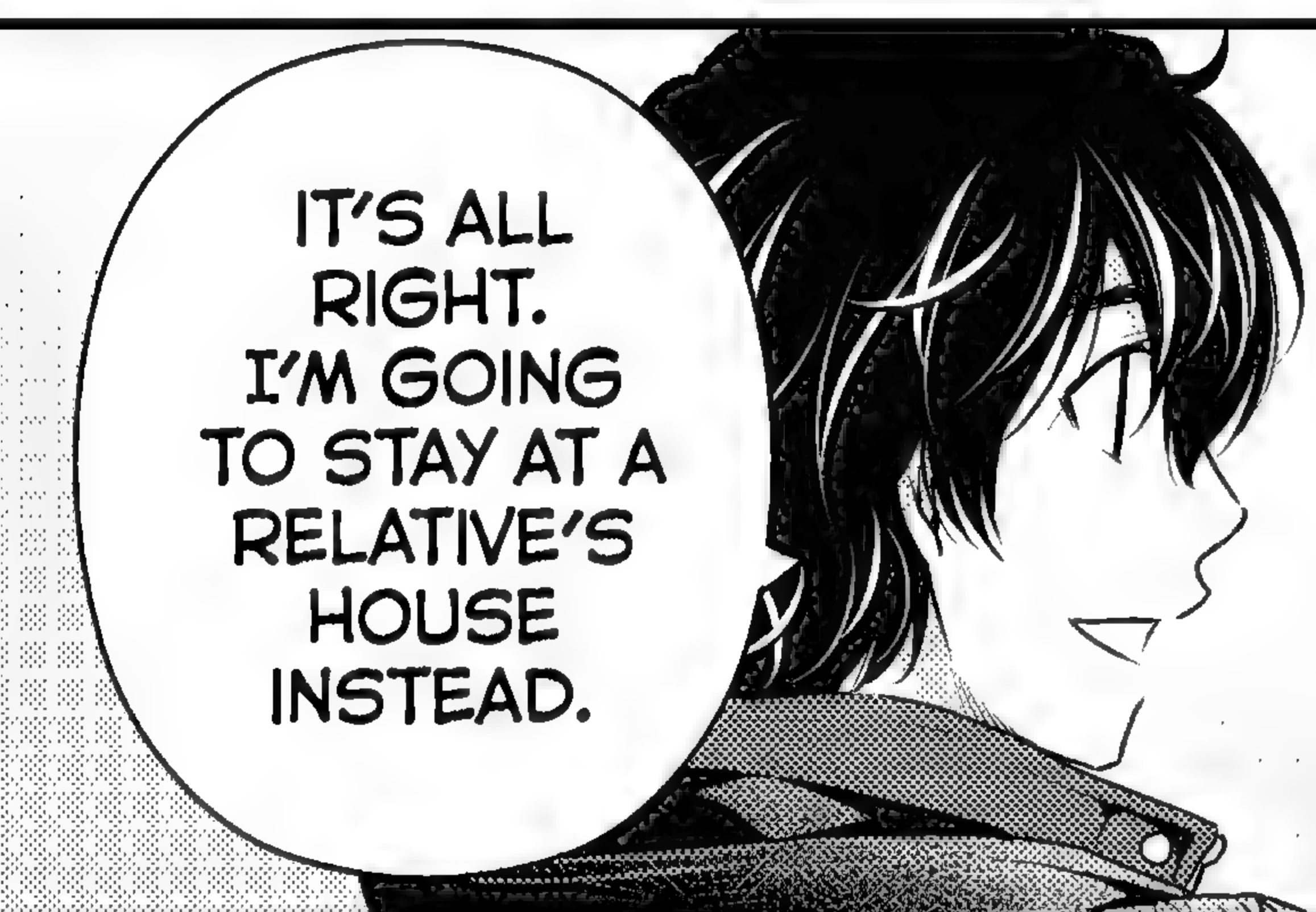




I CAN
GIVE YOU
MY ROOM
IF YOU'RE
LIKE.



EX-
CUSE
ME...



IT'S ALL
RIGHT.
I'M GOING
TO STAY AT A
RELATIVE'S
HOUSE
INSTEAD.



NO, WE
COULDN'T
ASK YOU
TO DO
THAT...

HUH
...?



YOU
DIDN'T
GET A
ROOM?

HUH
?

SORRY..

I FORGOT
TO ACTUALLY
CONFIRM
THE RESER-
VATION...



WELL,

IS
THAT
SO?

IN THAT
CASE...



OH, HELLO.
I'D LIKE
A ROOM
FOR THE
NIGHT...

SAKURA
WATERS
INN. HOW
MAY I
HELP
YOU?



WE'RE
COM-
PLET-
ELY
BOOKED
THIS
EVENING.

I'M
SORRY,
SIR.



MY
BAD.

HA,
HA.

WAY TO
GO,
BONE-
HEAD!

LEND ME
YOUR
PHONE. I'LL
LOOK FOR
ANOTHER
INN OR
HOTEL.



WE
DON'T
HAVE
ANY
VACAN-
CIES...



MY
APOLO-
GIES,
SIR...



TONIGHT?
I'M SORRY,
BUT WE'RE...



PLENTY!

NO
SWEAT!
THERE
ARE
OTHER
OPTIONS!



WE CAN
PROBABLY
FIND
SOME-
WHERE
TO STAY
DOWN-
TOWN!

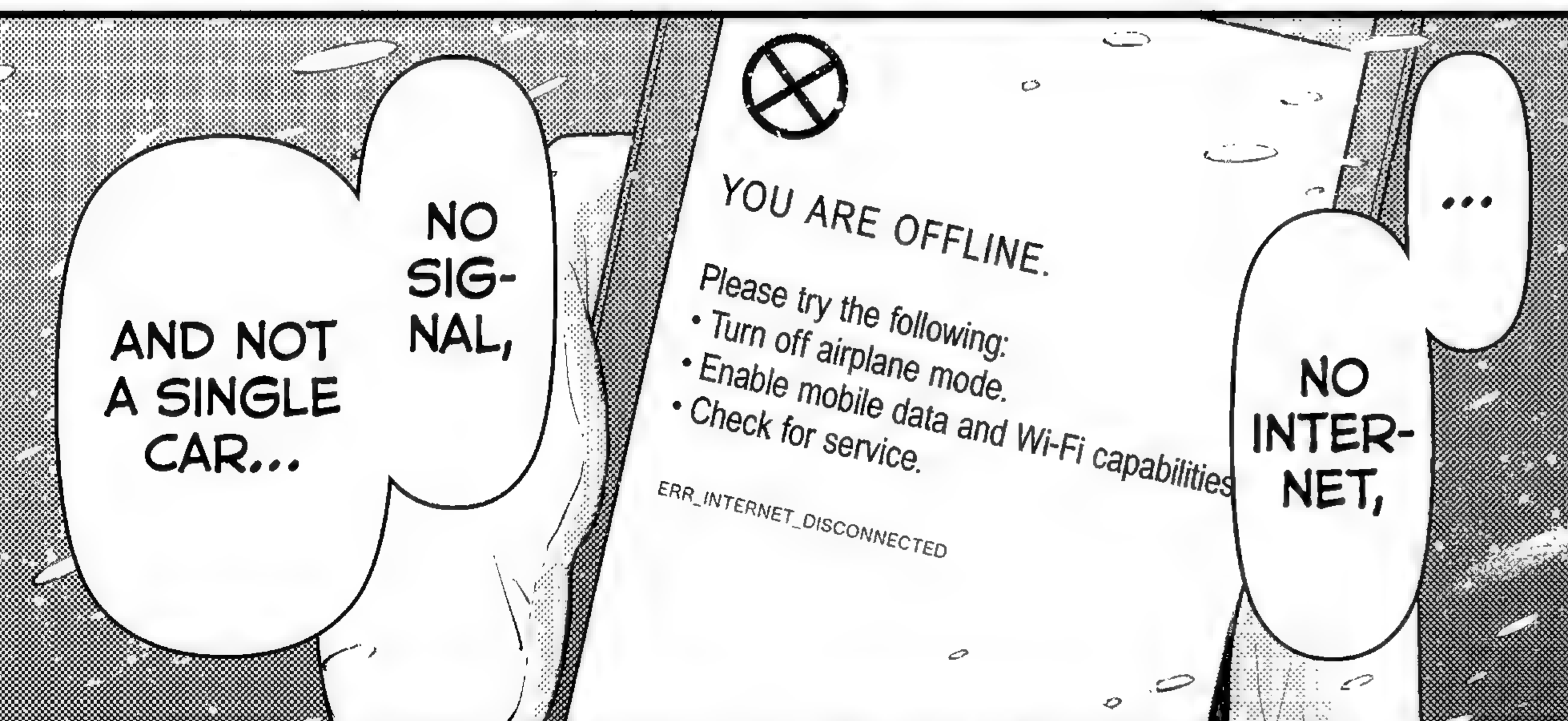
LET'S
JUST GET
A TAXI
FOR NOW!



DON'T
MELT
ON ME.

H E E Y.

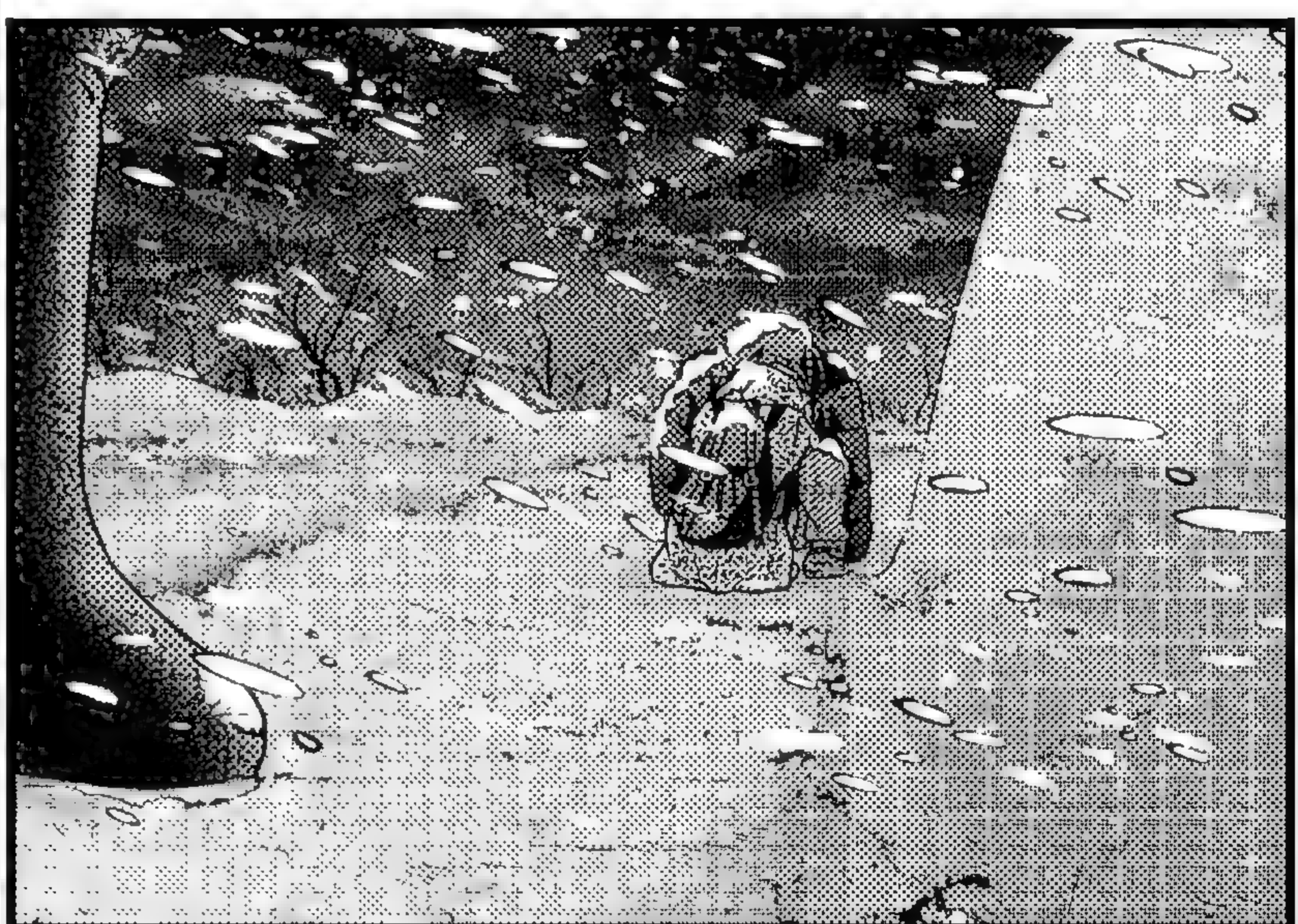
SPSH
SPSH
NO
NO
+

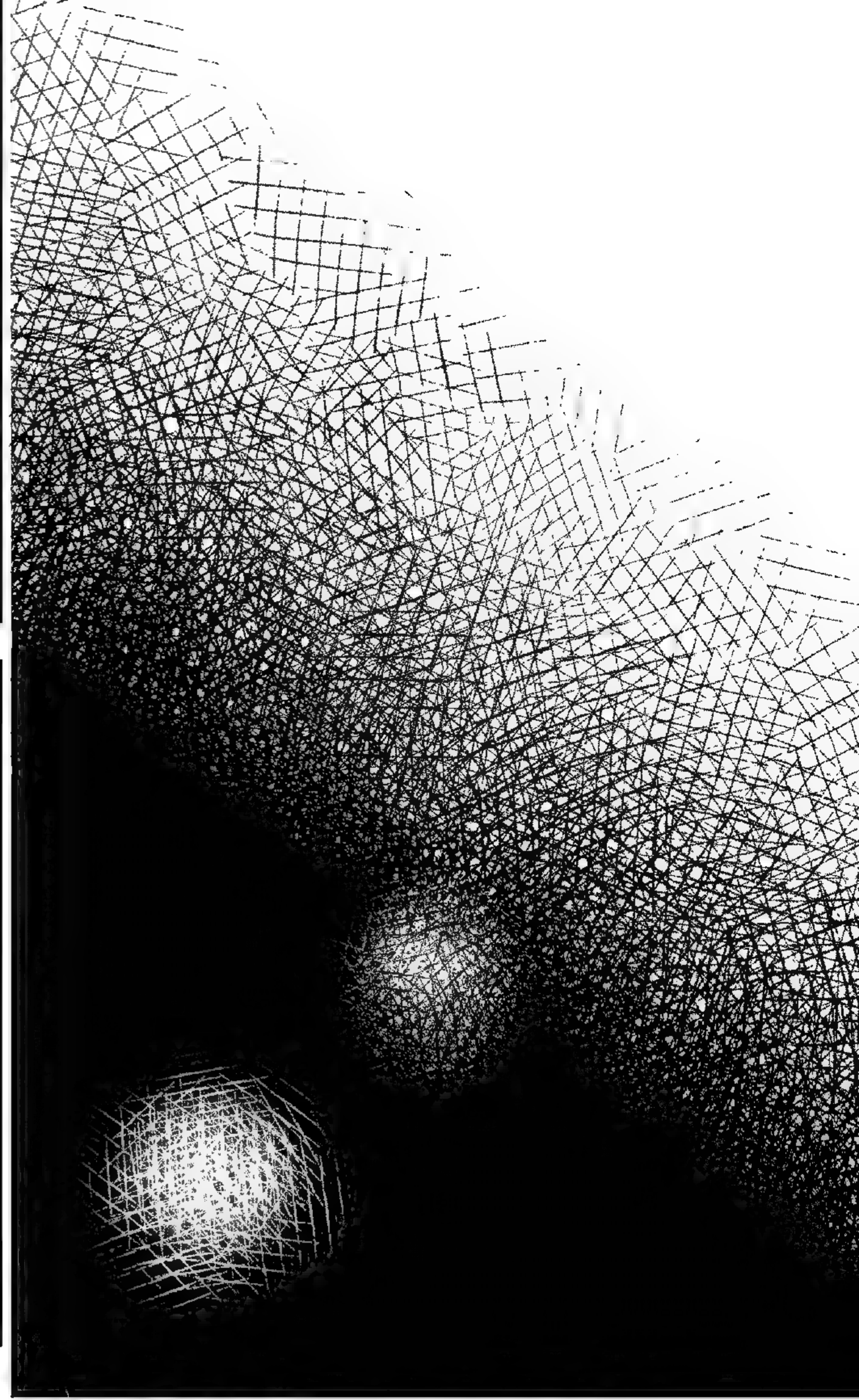
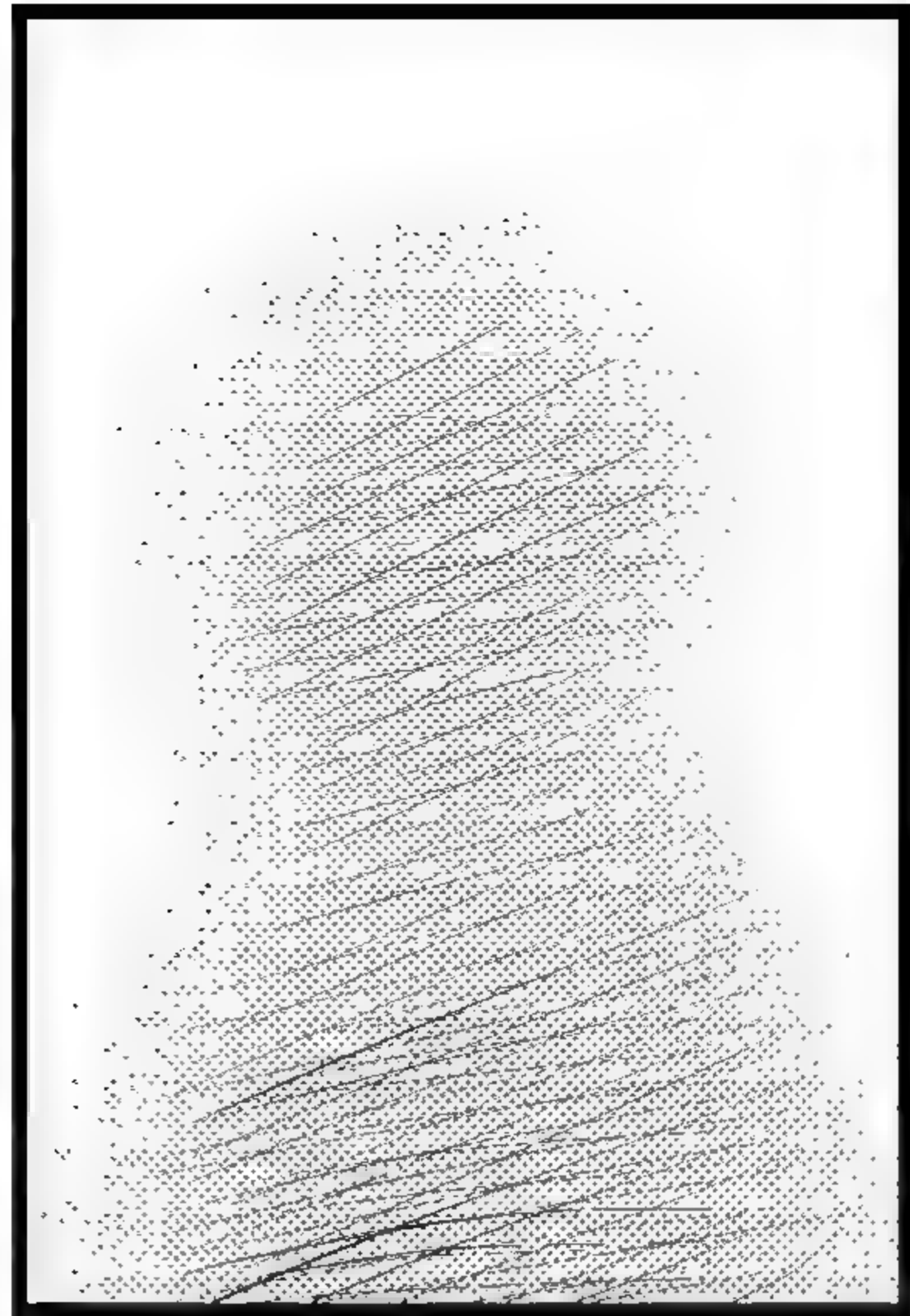
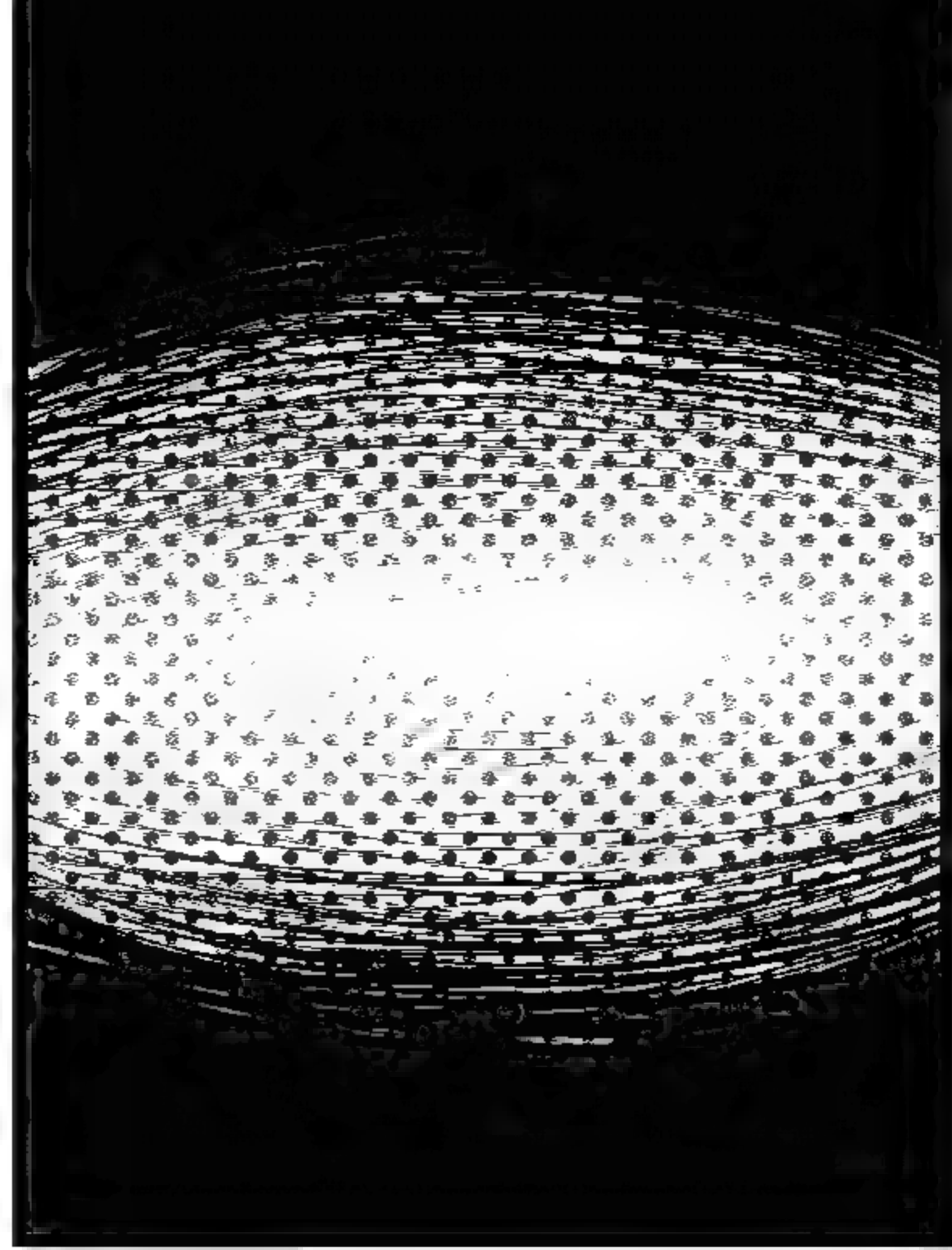


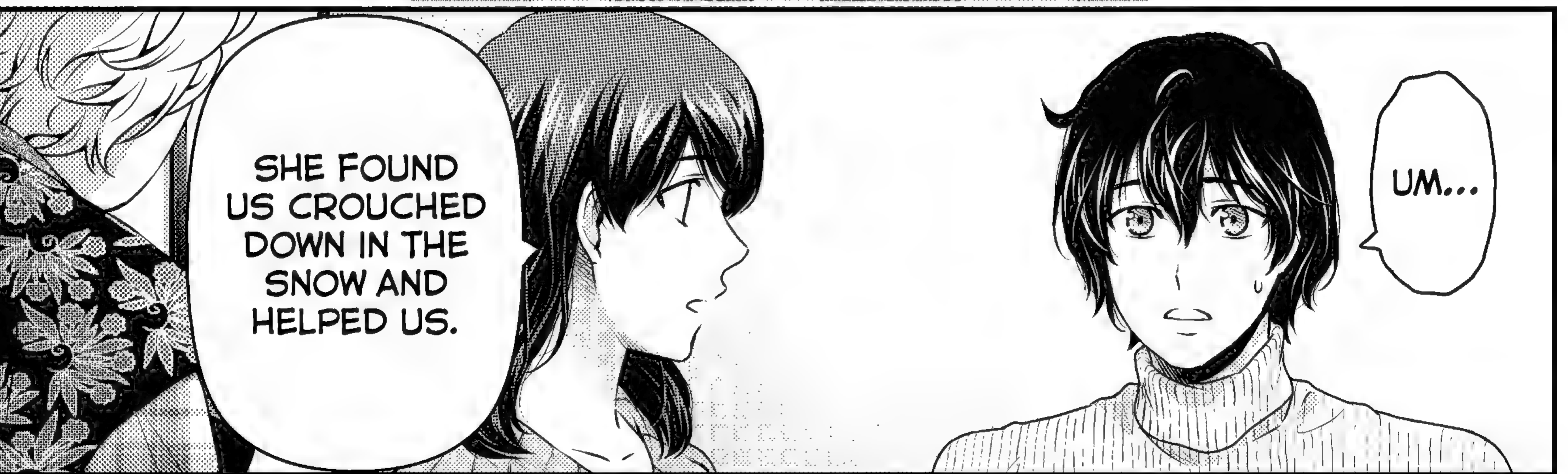
*YOSHI IKUZO: A FAMOUS JAPANESE ENKA SINGER. RUI IS REFERENCING ONE OF HIS SONGS, I'M GOING TO TOKYO.



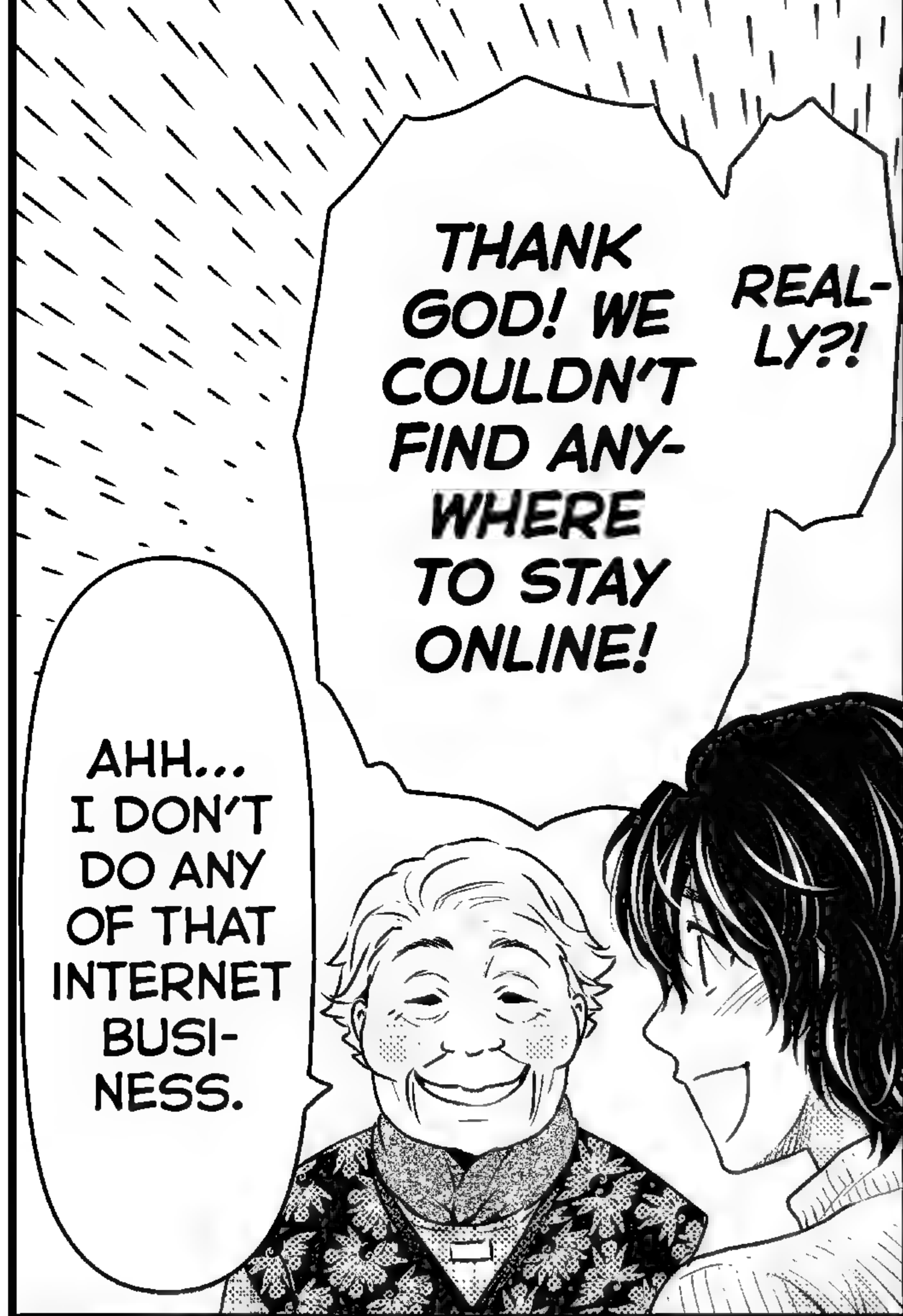








SIGN: B&B
TOHO



THANK
GOD! WE
COULDN'T
FIND ANY-
WHERE
TO STAY
ONLINE!

REAL-
LY?!

AHH...
I DON'T
DO ANY
OF THAT
INTERNET
BUSI-
NESS.

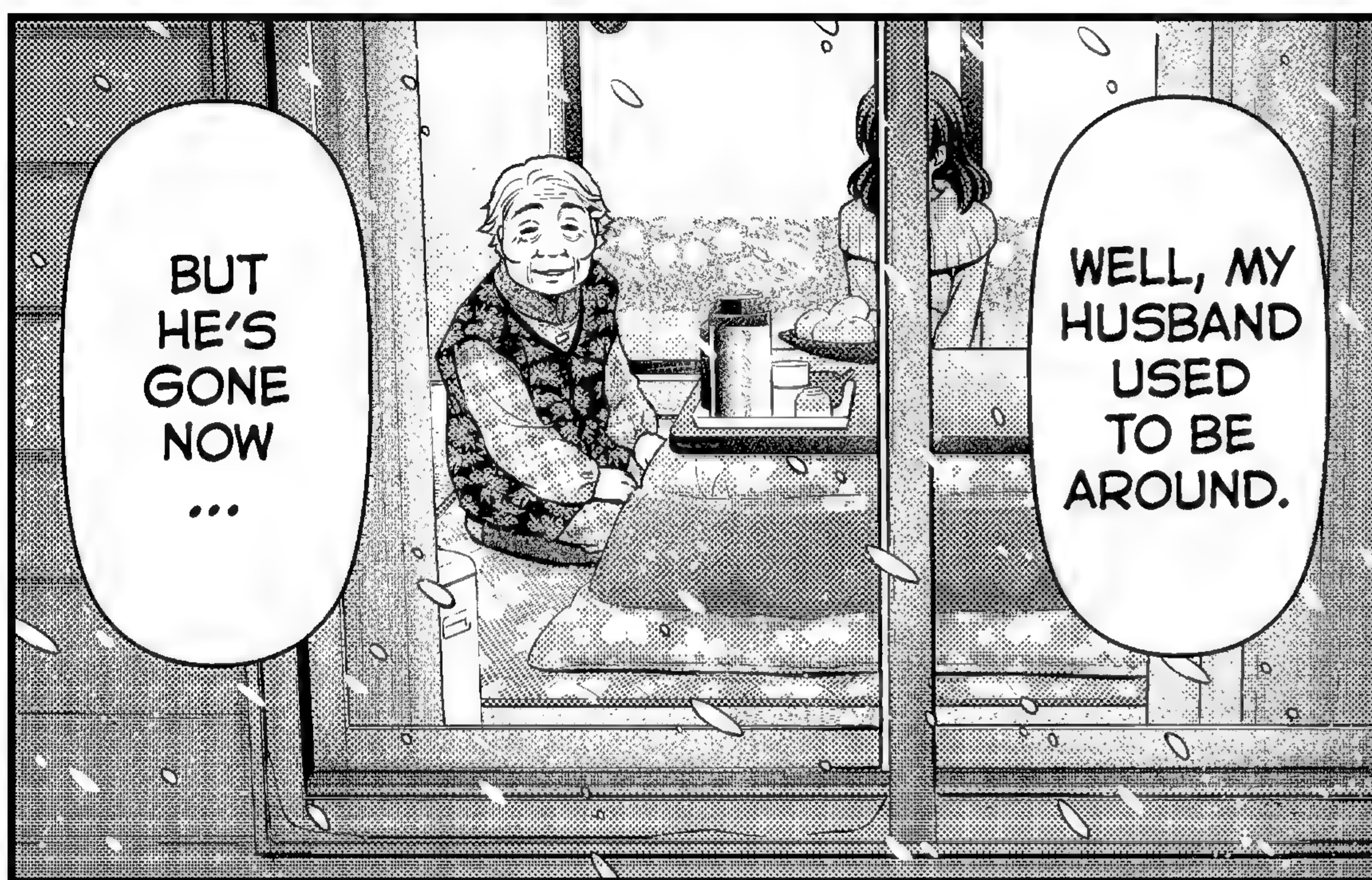


THIS
HERE'S
ONE
OF THE
ROOMS.



NO, I
LIVE
IN THE
HOUSE
OVER.

I RUN
A BED
AND
BREAK-
FAST,
Y'SEE.



BUT
HE'S
GONE
NOW
...

WELL, MY
HUSBAND
USED
TO BE
AROUND.



DO YOU
RUN THE
WHOLE
PLACE BY
YOURSELF?

MORE
OR
LESS.



THAT'D
BE
SWELL!

REALLY
?!

おは
BEAM

SURE
THING
...



OH, I DUNNO.
CLEARIN' THE
SNOW EVERY
YEAR'S GET-
TIN' HARD ON
THESE OLD
BONES...

エホ
SHAKE

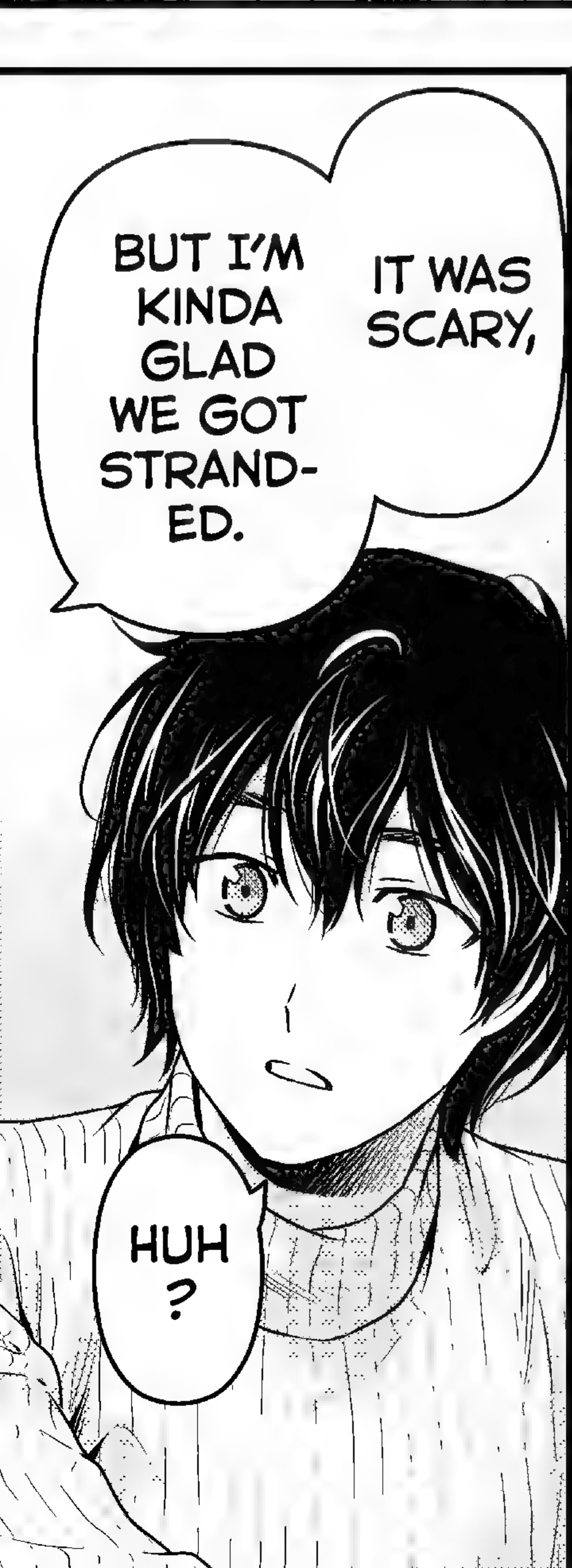
エホ
SHAKE

W-WOULD
YOU LIKE
A HAND
WITH
THAT?



DON'T
SAY
THAT!
YOU'RE
STILL
SPRY AND
HEALTHY!

HONESTLY,
I WISH
HE'D COME
BACK
FOR ME
SOON...



SHE SAID
THERE
AREN'T
ANY OTHER
GUESTS,
RIGHT?

YEAH.

HE-
YOU SAY
IT'S KIND
OF EMBAR-
RASSING
...

SO,
WHICH OF
US SHOULD
TAKE THE
FIRST
BATH?

I WAS
REALLY
HAPPY
WHEN YOU
SAID...

...YOU'D
PROTECT
ME NO
MATTER
WHAT.

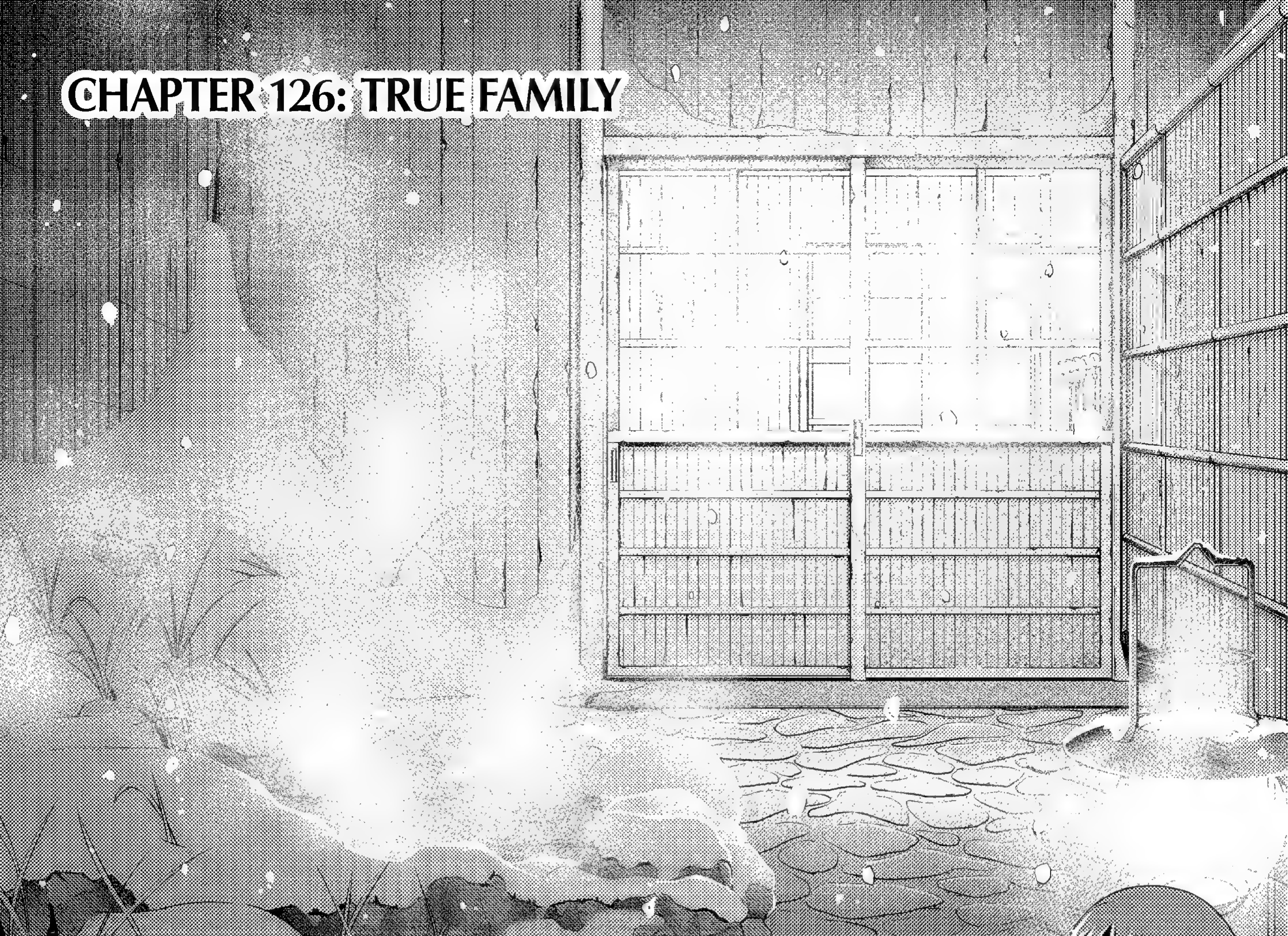
WHY
DON'T WE
GET IN
TOGETHER
?

IN
THAT
CASE,

...WE
GET IN
TO
GETH
ER?

IN THAT
CASE,
WHY
DON'T...

CHAPTER 126: TRUE FAMILY



HEY.

TAKE OFF
THE REST
FOR ME.



I ALWAYS
TAKE MY
PANTIES
OFF LAST,
THOUGH.

I
GUESS.

HUH
...



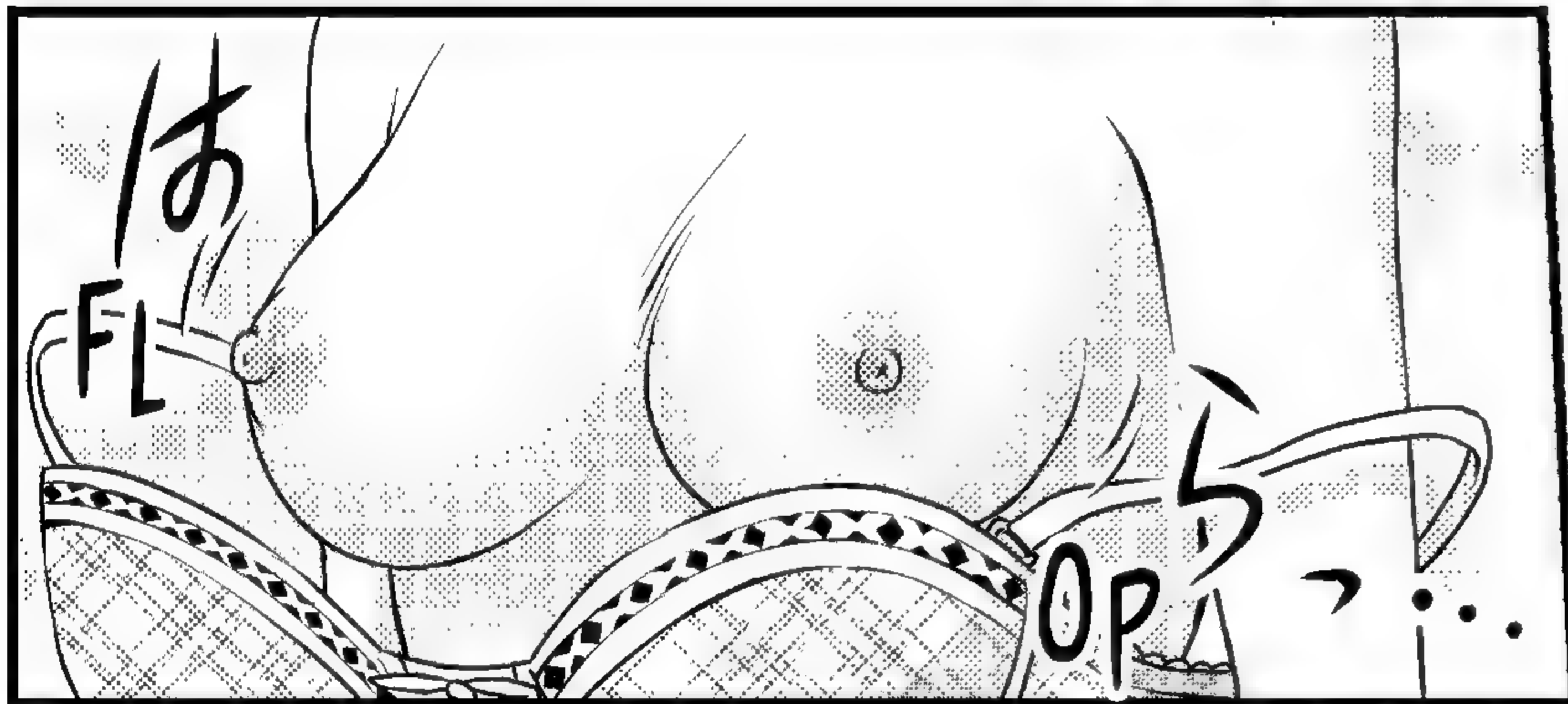
WELL,
YEAH.
MY GIRL-
FRIEND'S
STRIPPING
IN FRONT
OF ME.

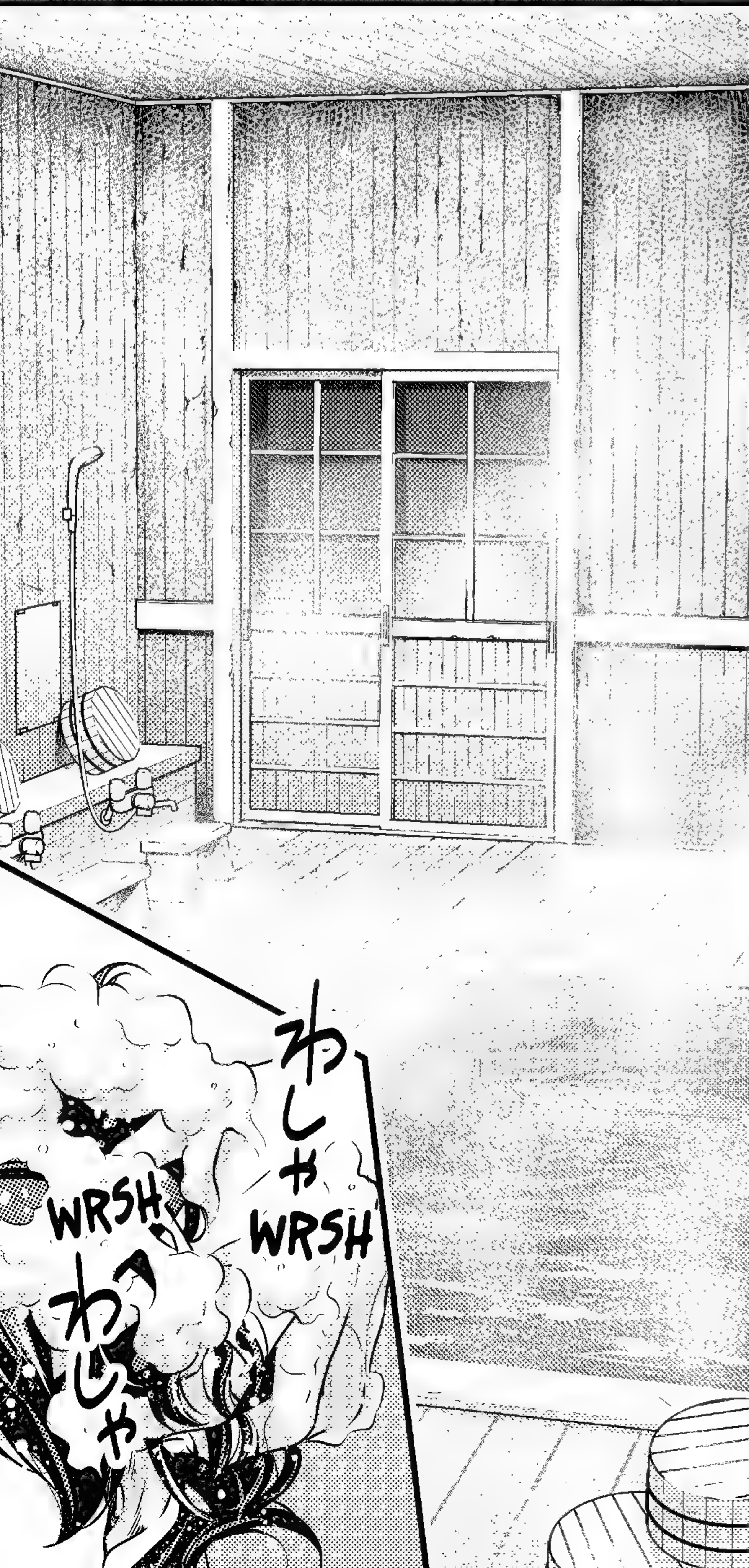
YOU'RE
BLUSH-
ING.

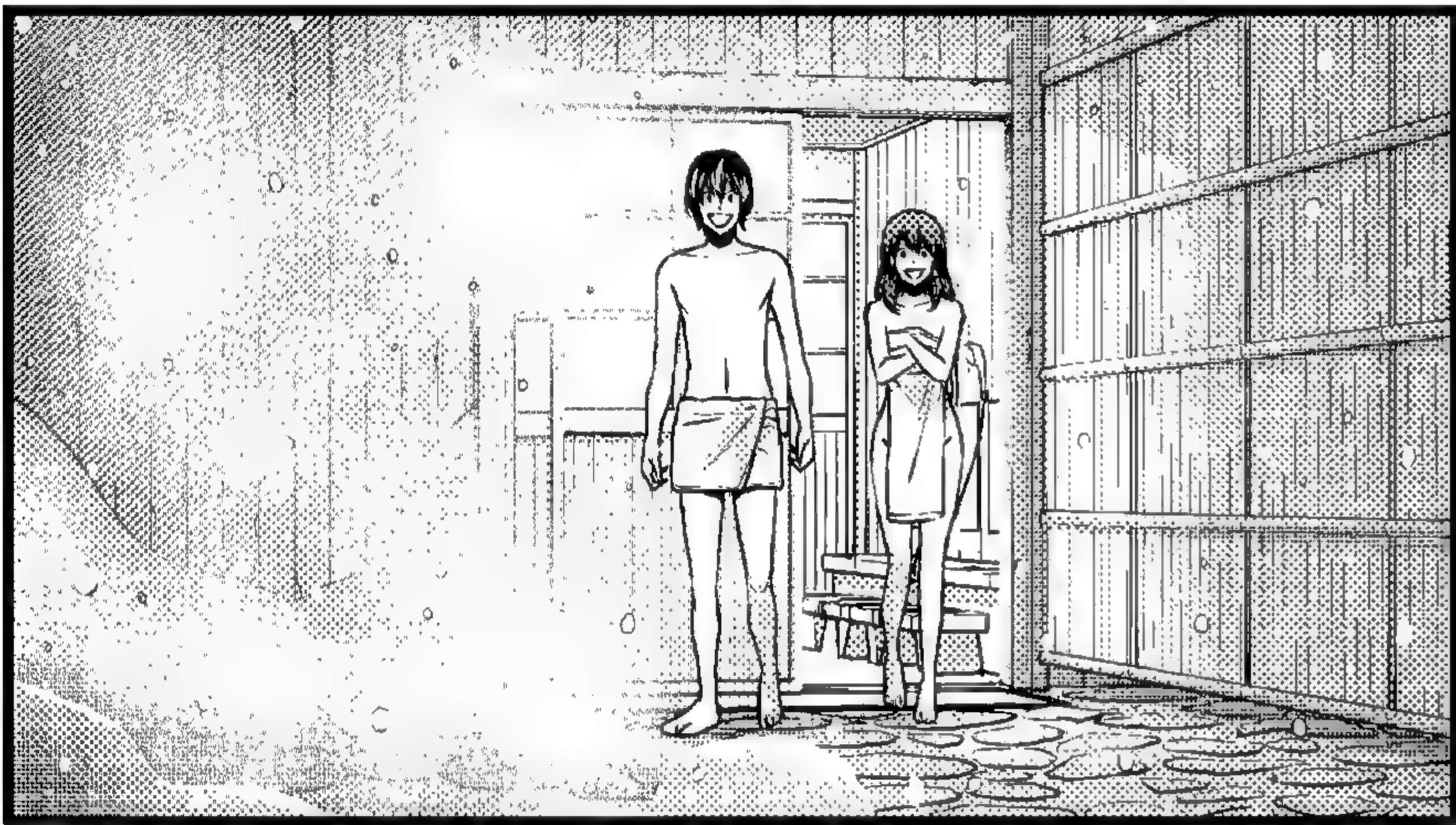
HMM.



YOU
USUALLY
TAKE
YOUR
PANTS
OFF
FIRST?









DON'T SAY THAT ...

BUT YOU'VE PROBABLY GOTTEN IN WITH HINA-NEE...

OH, SURE, I'VE ONLY TAKEN BATHS WITH YOU,

HOW DID TWO WORDS COME BACK TO BITE ME THIS HARD?!

N-NO, I DO! THAT'S RIGHT!

YOU DON'T REMEMBER?!

IT'S THE THIRD TIME! YUP!



AND YOU'RE THE ONLY ONE I WANT TO KISS.

I'M ONLY HAPPY TO HEAR YOU SAY YOU LOVE ME NOW.

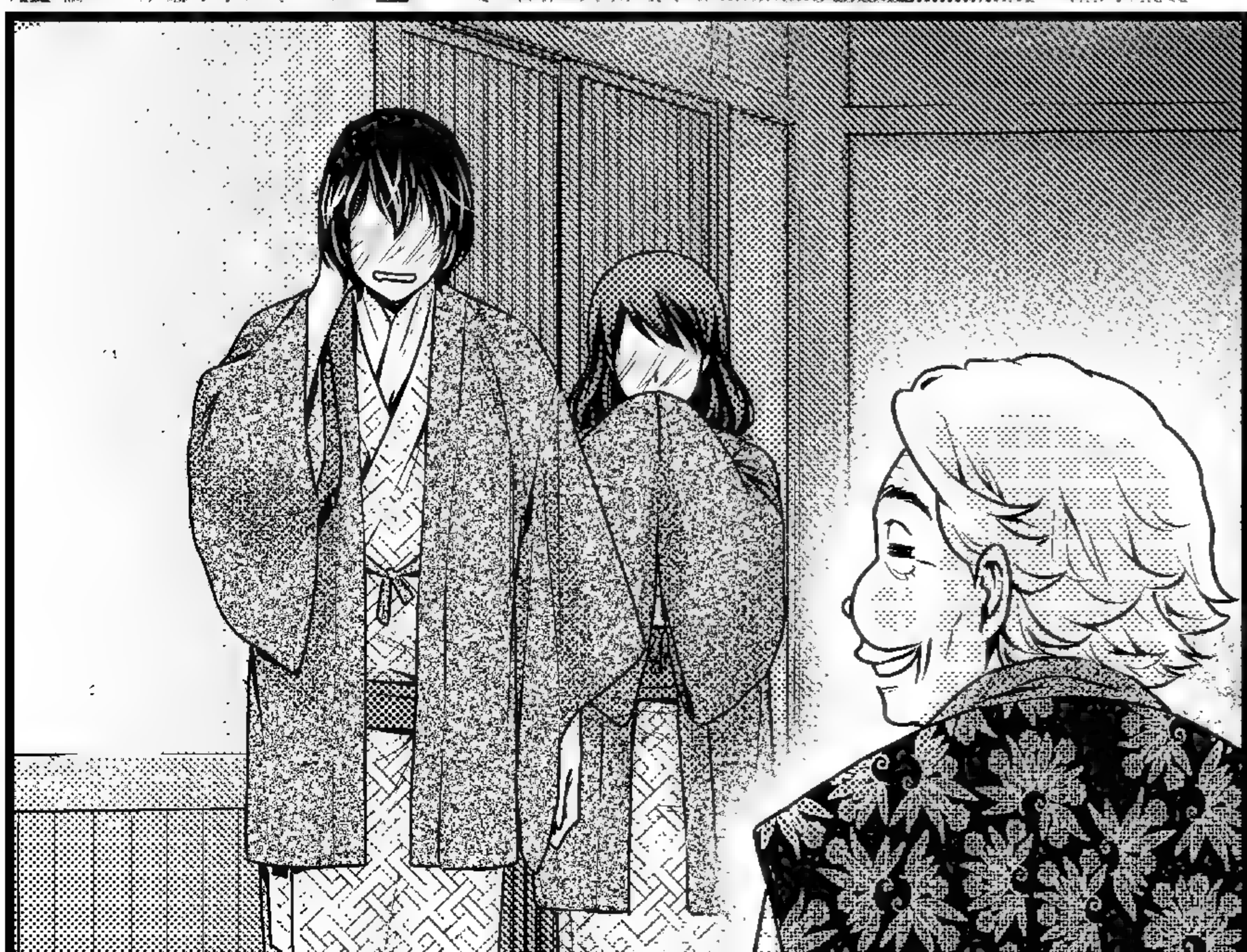
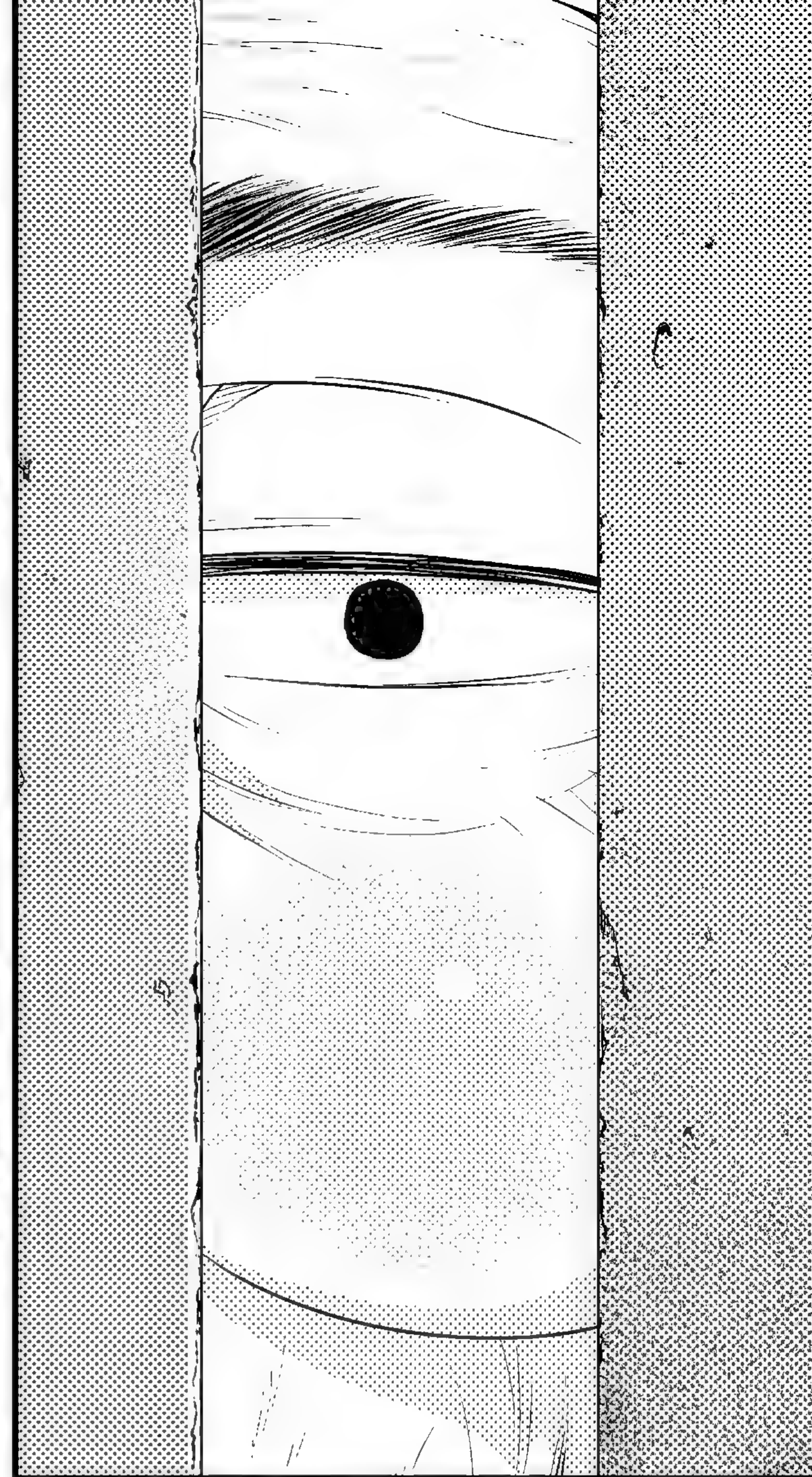


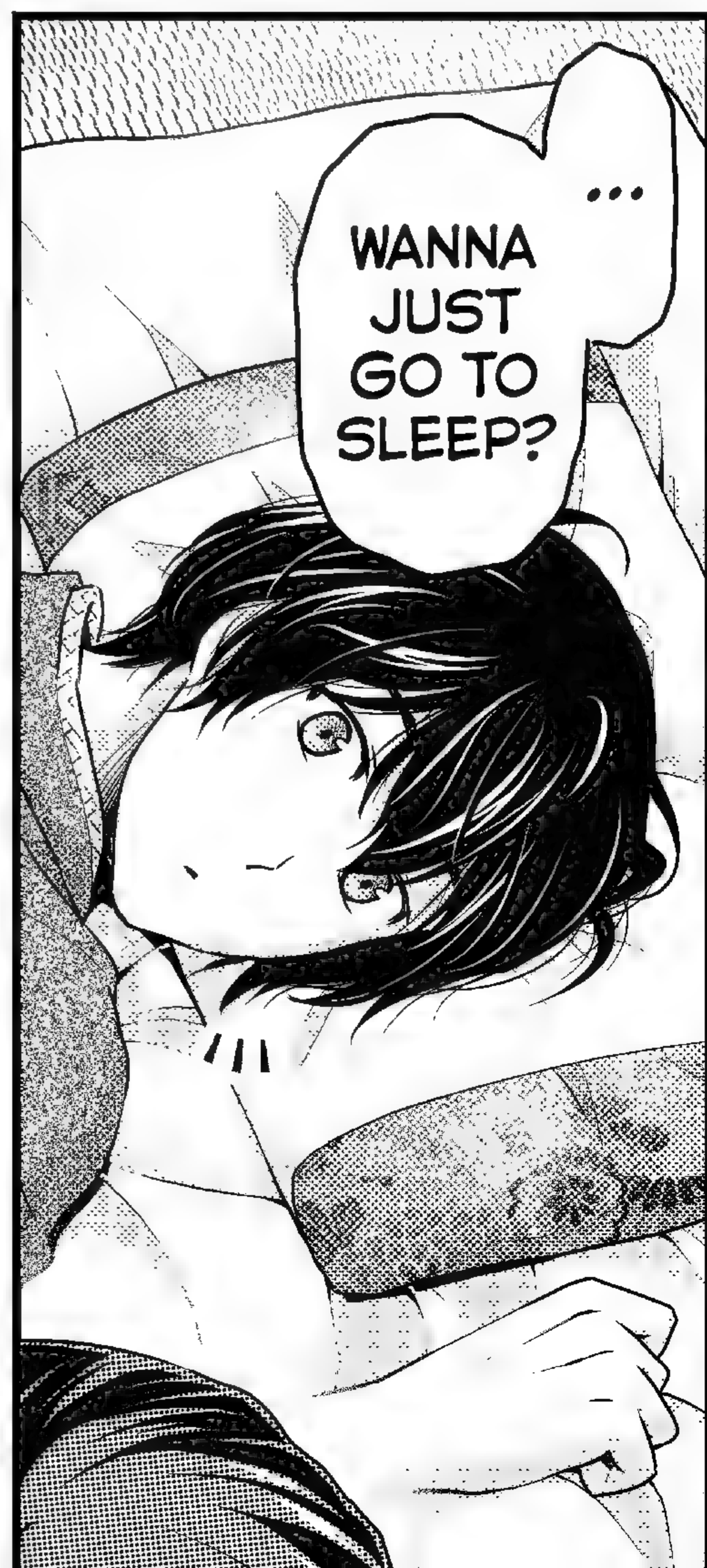
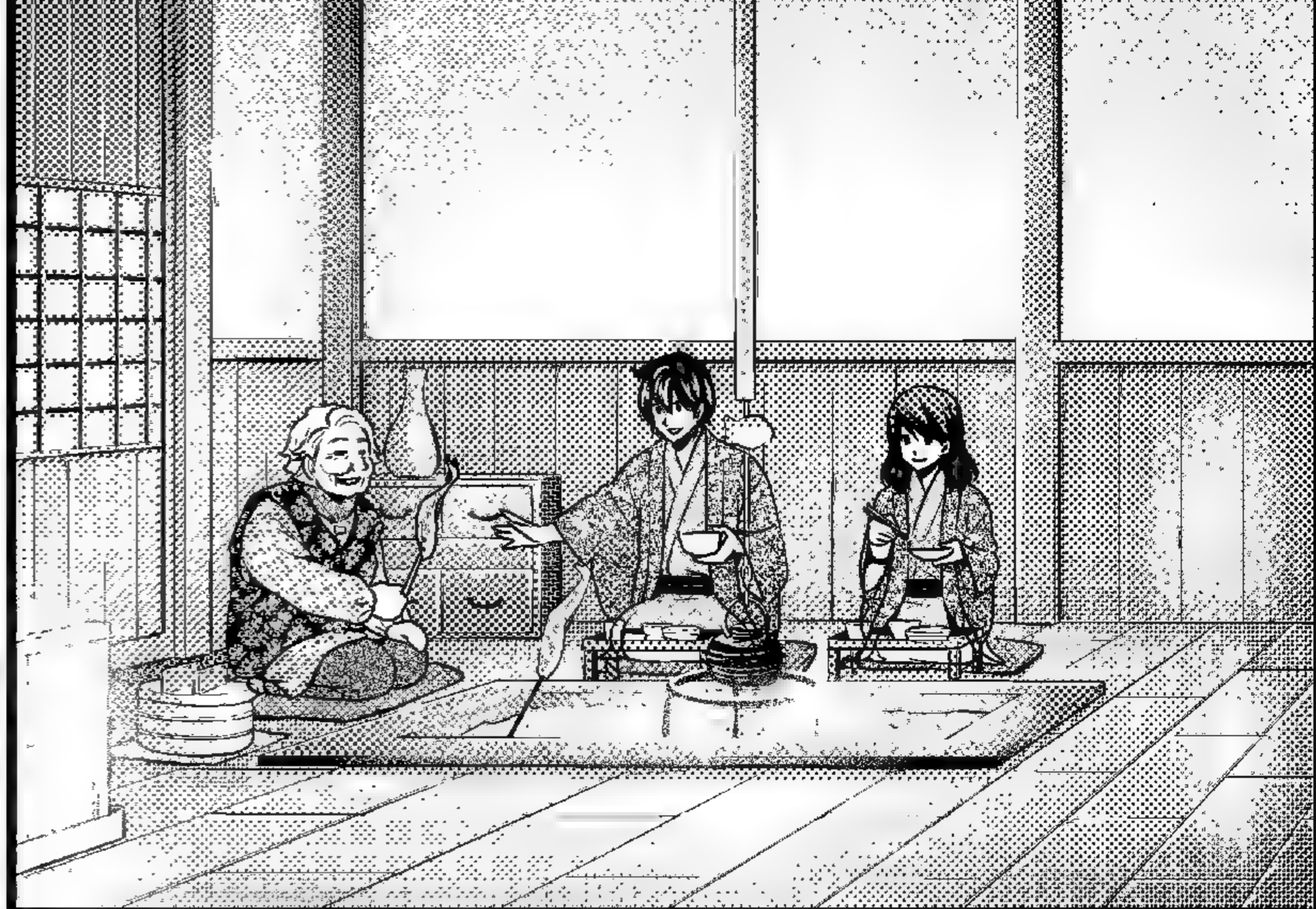
AT LEAST WAIT UNTIL WE GET BACK TO THE ROOM ...

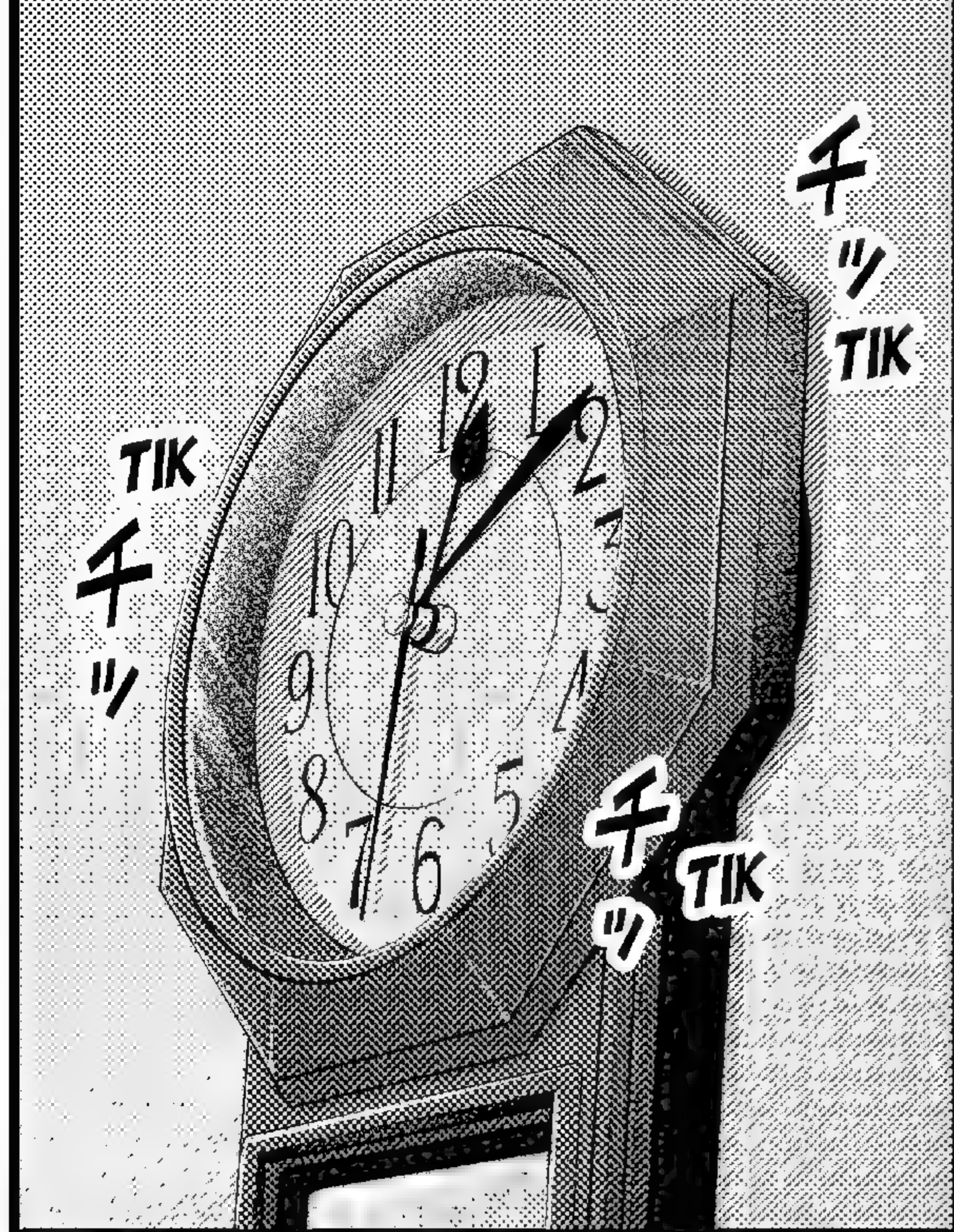
I MIGHT NOT BE ABLE TO HOLD MYSELF BACK.

... CRAP.

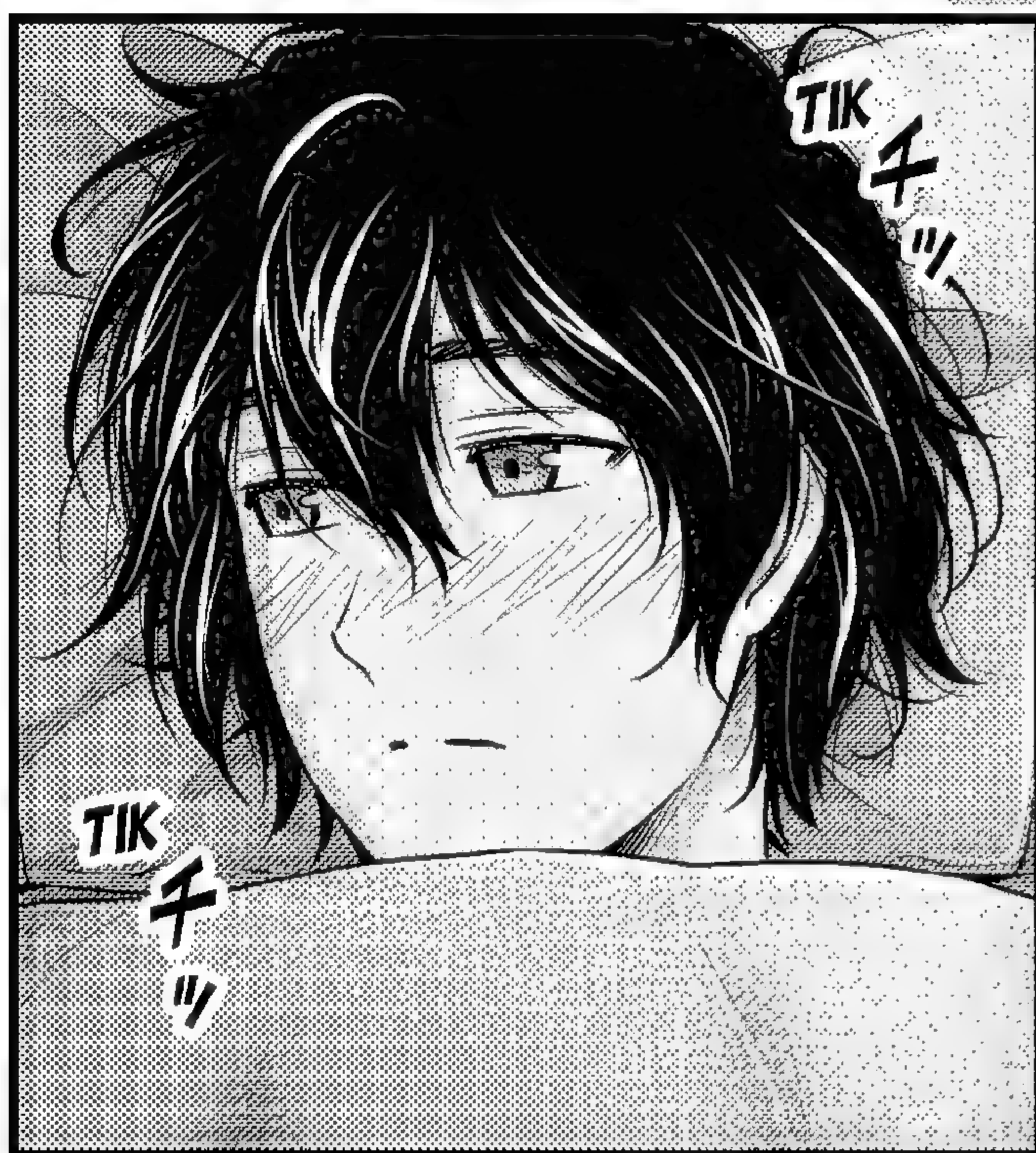
HUH?







ALL
RIGHT
...
LET'S
GET
SOME
SLEEP,
THEN.



APPAR-
ENTLY,
IT'S
REALLY
WARM...

...IF YOU
GO TO
SLEEP
CUDDLING.



IT
SHOULD
WARM UP
EVENTU-
ALLY.

IT ALWAYS
IS WHEN
YOU FIRST
GET INTO
BED.

THE
FUTON'S
...
KINDA
CHILLY,
HUH?



Y'KNOW,
I READ
SOME-
THING IN
A BOOK
ONCE.



I ALSO
READ THAT
IT'S EVEN
WARMER
IF YOU'RE
NAKED.

I'VE READ
THE SAME
THING
BEFORE.



WHY
NOT
?!

SURE
...



WANNA
TRY?



WHAT
TIME IS
IT...?

MMM
...

WAKE
UP. IT'S
MORN-
ING.

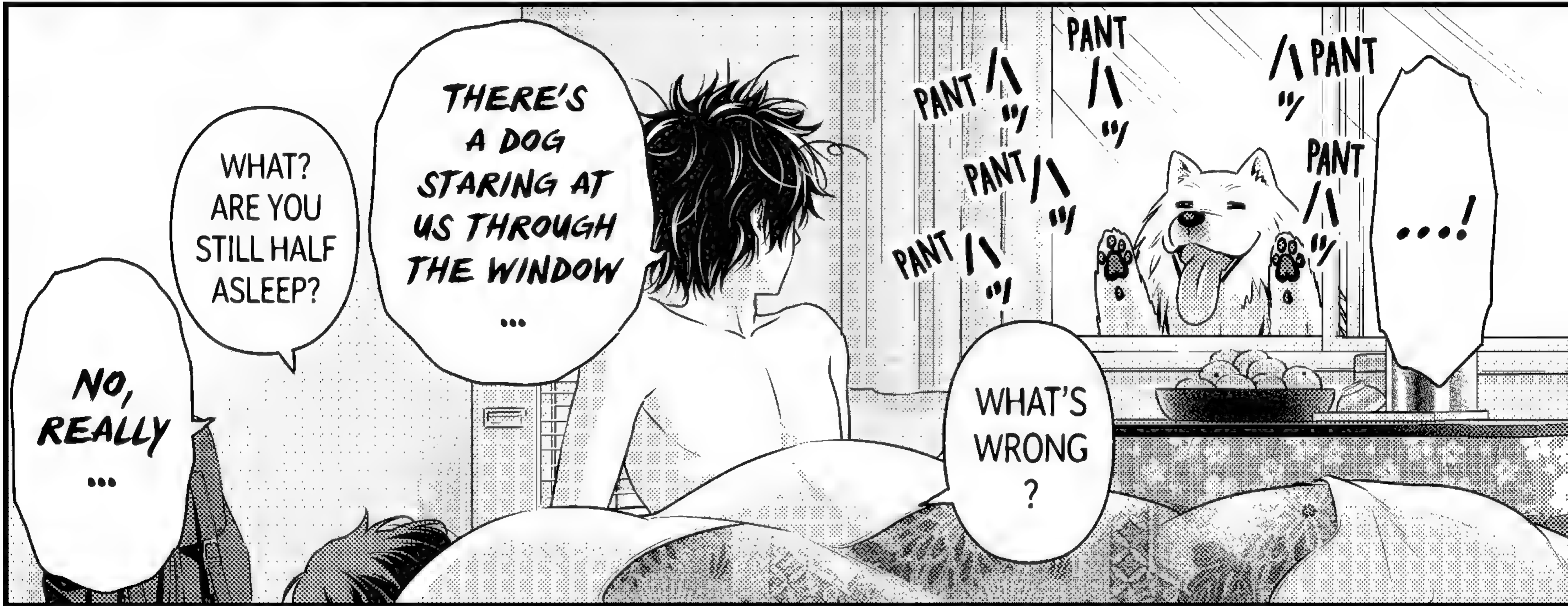
RUI.

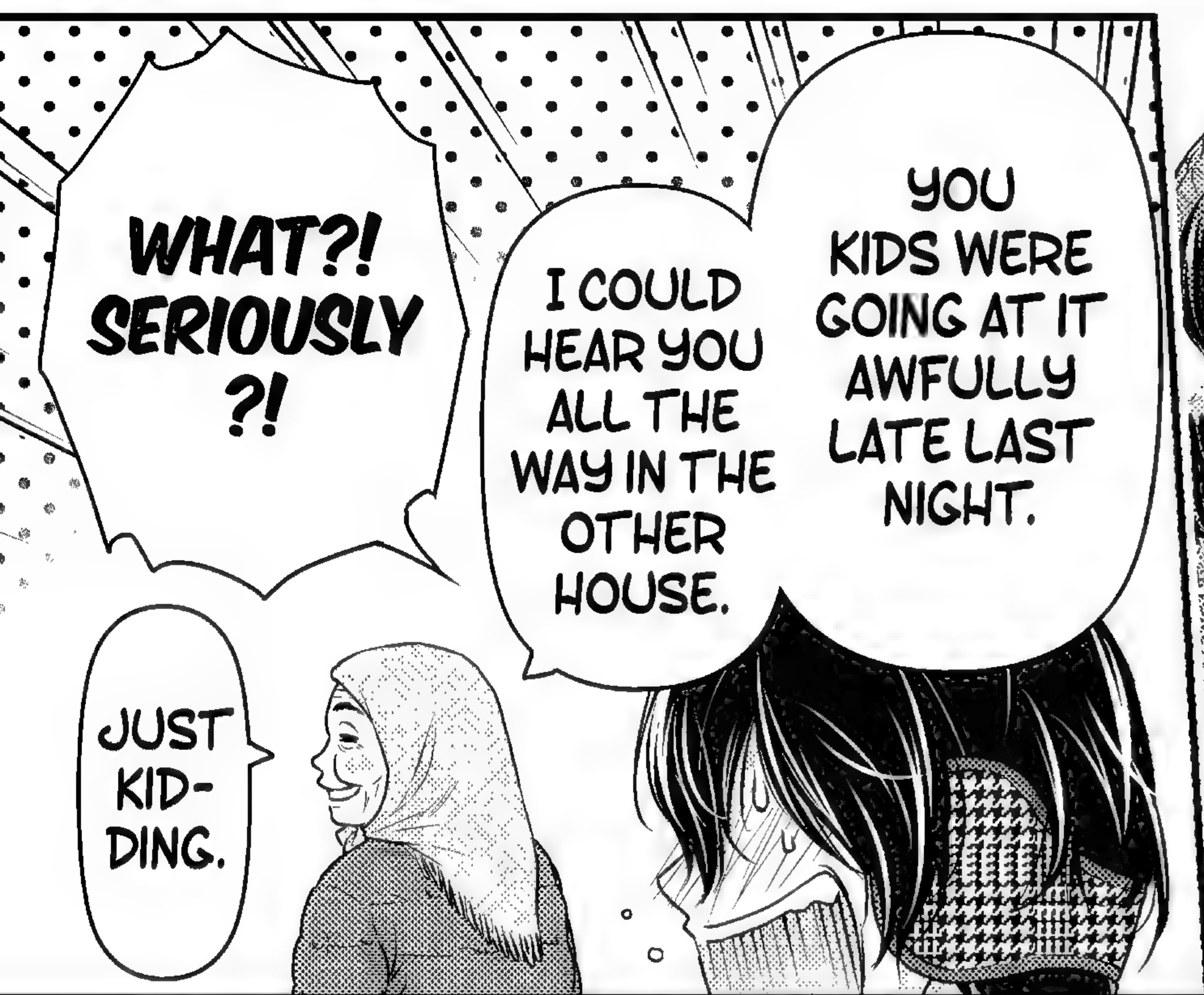
UHH.
LET'S
SEE
...



MY
NOSE
IS
FREEZ-
ING...









AGH!

YEAH.
I'LL BE
FINE ONCE
I GET THE
HANG OF—

YOU ALL
RIGHT
OVER
THERE?

SLIP
FWOO
WUMP



HUP
...

IT'S
PRETTY
HEAVY,
HUH?



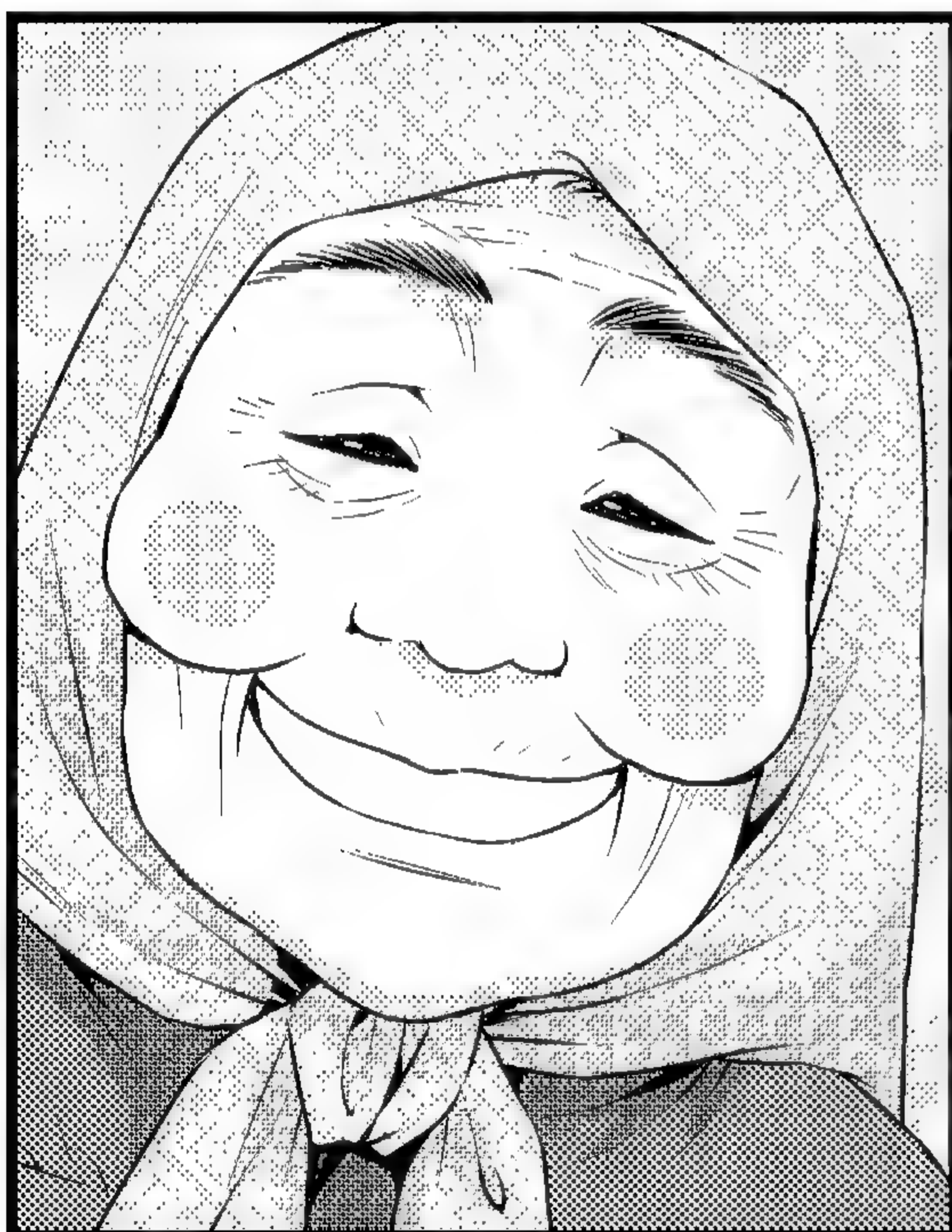
I DIDN'T
FALL
BECAUSE
I WANTED
TO PLAY!

LICK

HEY!
KNOCK
IT OFF!

LICK

LICK



HE
PROBABLY
WON'T
STOP
UNLESS
YOU PLAY
WITH HIM
FOR A
LITTLE.

DOWN,
JIRO!

あAH
はHA
はHA

WAG

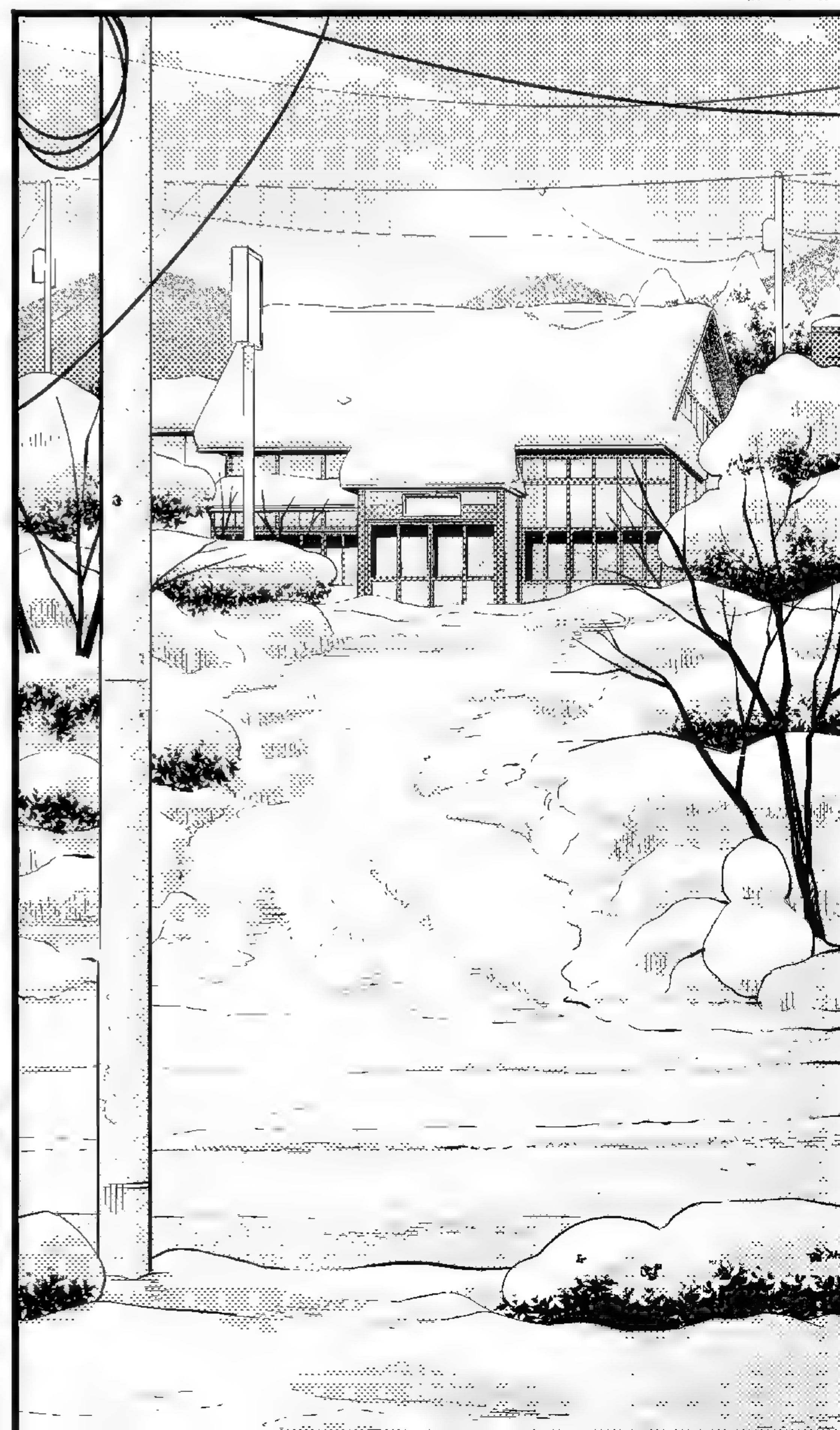
WAG

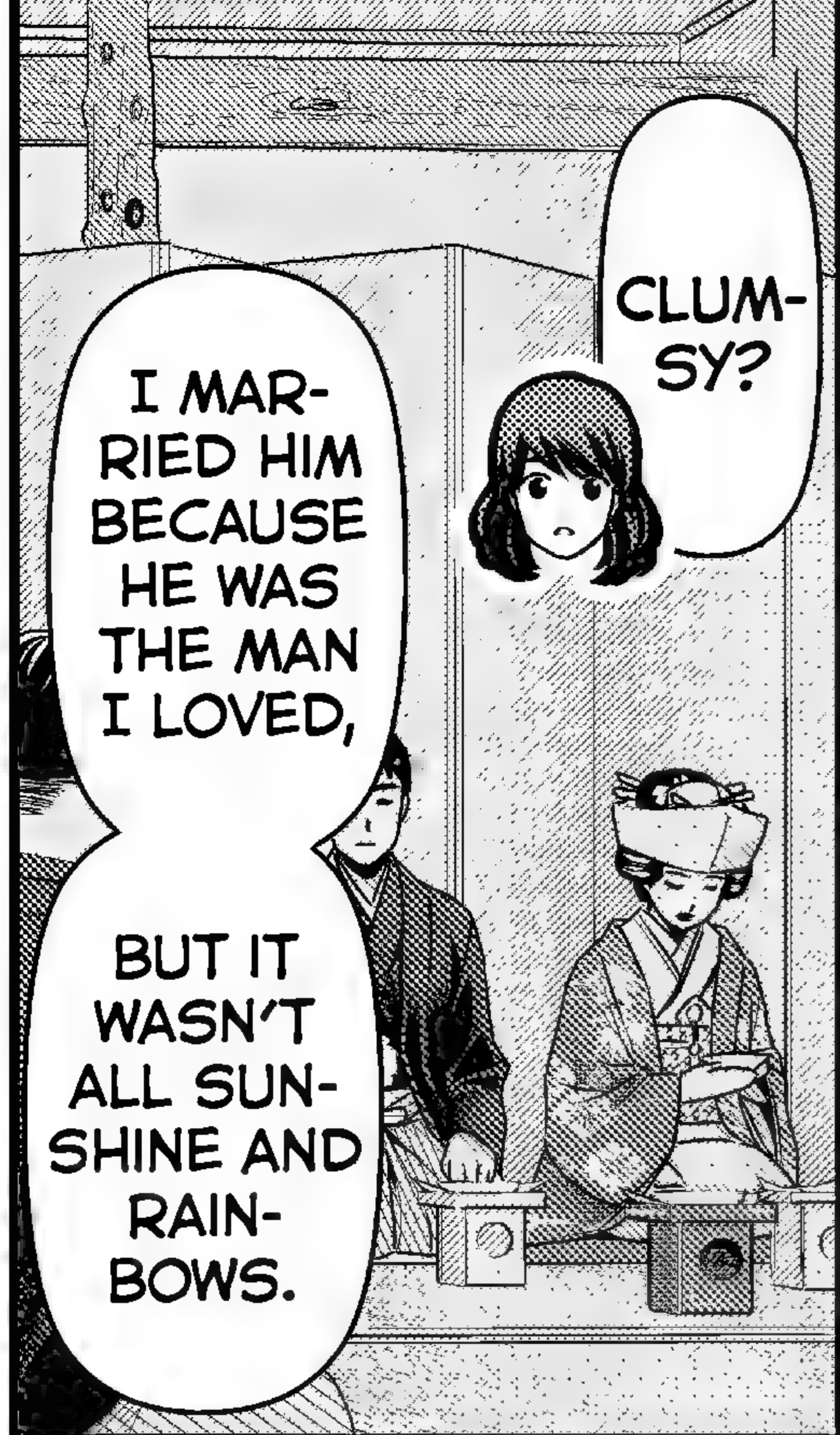


OH.

Y'KNOW,
THIS KIND
OF THING
MAKES
IT FEEL
LIKE...

...WE'RE A REAL
"FAMILY."

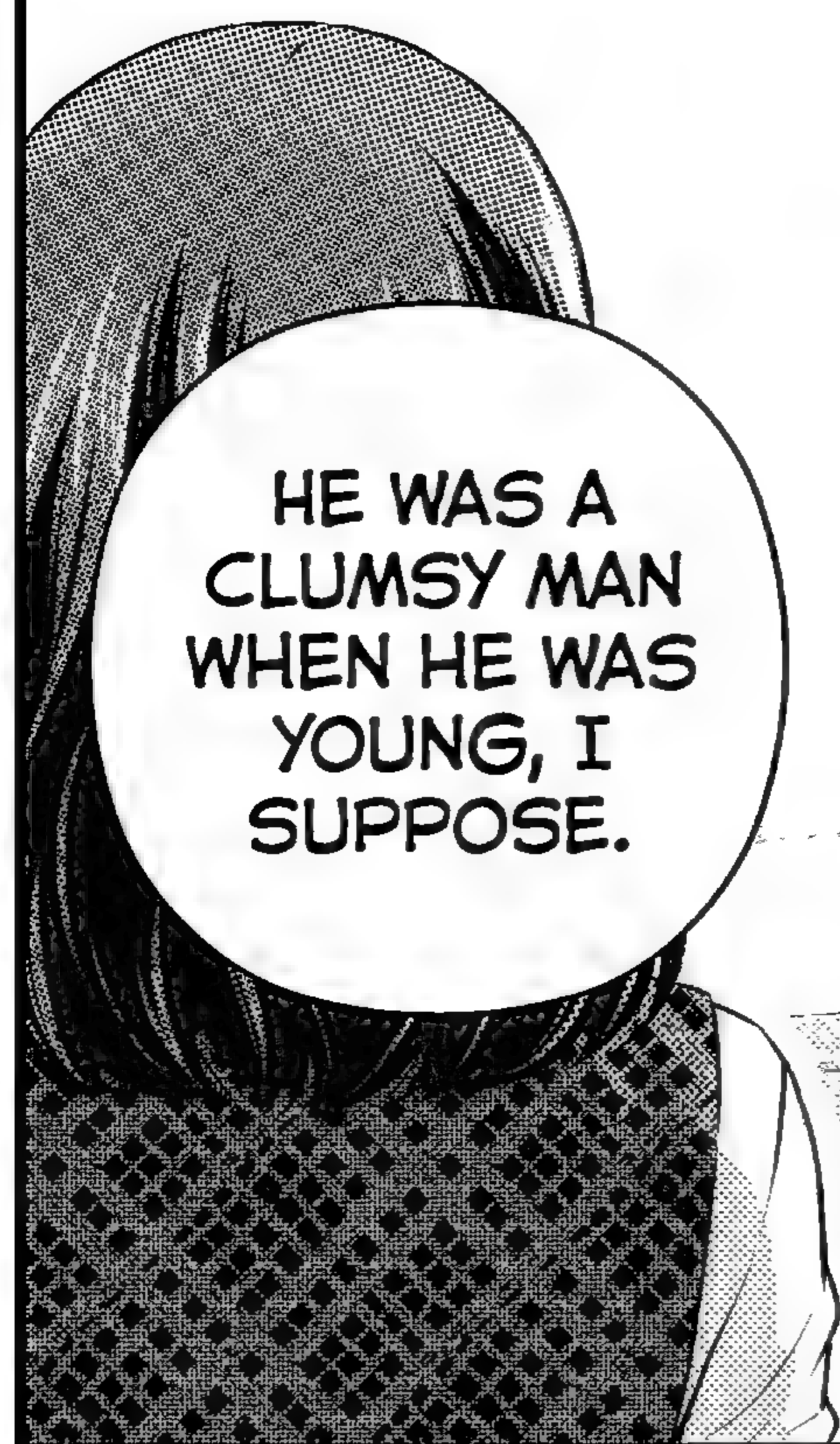




I MARRIED HIM BECAUSE HE WAS THE MAN I LOVED,

BUT IT WASN'T ALL SUNSHINE AND RAINBOWS.

CLUMSY?



HE WAS A CLUMSY MAN WHEN HE WAS YOUNG, I SUPPOSE.



GRAND-PA, EH?

WELL ...



THEN THERE WERE HIS OCCASIONAL DRUNKEN OUTBURSTS ...



OR THE TIME HE UP AND QUIT HIS JOB OUT OF THE BLUE ONE DAY.



THERE WAS THE TIME HE PILED UP A MOUNTAIN OF DEBT WITHOUT TELLING ME,



BUT,

IT DIDN'T USED TO BE SO EASY FOR COUPLES TO SPLIT UP BACK IN OUR DAY.

A DIVORCE, EH?

I FEEL THAT IT'S ONLY BECAUSE WE OVERCAME SO MANY OBSTACLES TOGETHER OVER THE YEARS...



DID YOU EVER THINK ABOUT...

UM ...

...GETTING A DIVORCE?



I'M STILL AMAZED WE MANAGED TO GET BY ALL THESE YEARS.



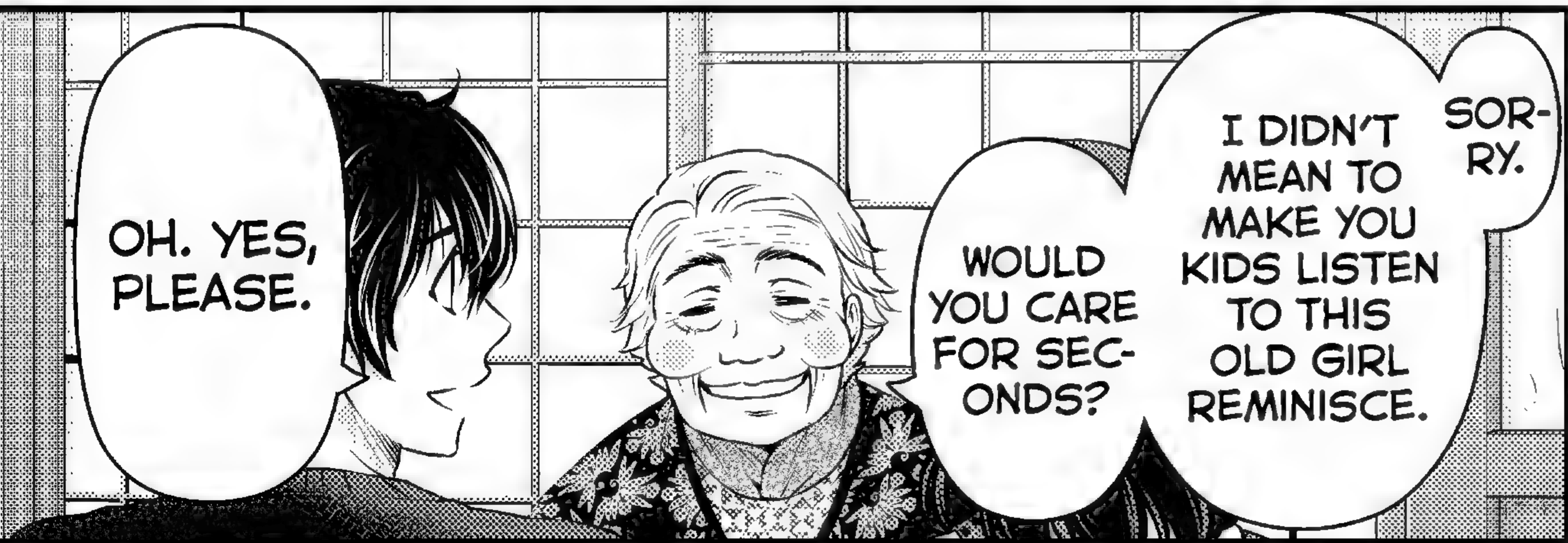
...WERE
ABLE TO
BECOME
A TRUE
COUPLE.

...THAT
WE...



I'M GLAD
WE STAYED
TOGETHER
THROUGH
IT ALL.

THAT'S
WHY,



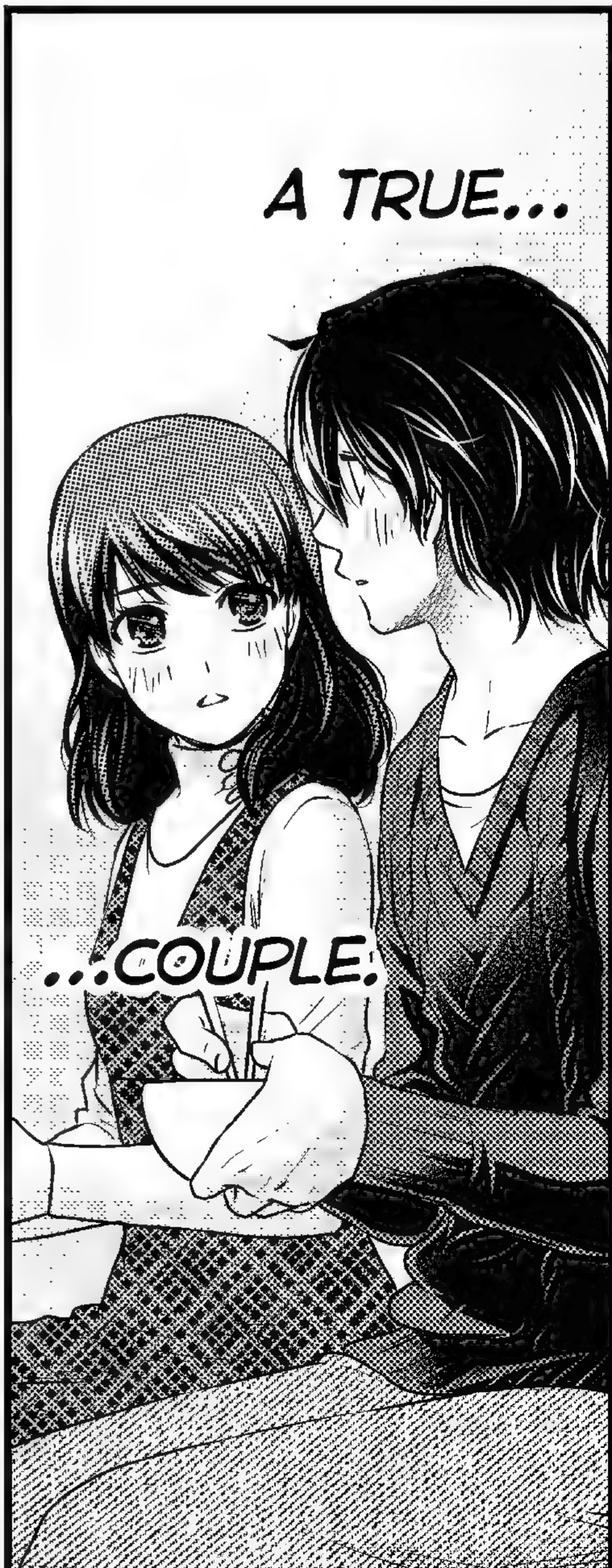
OH. YES,
PLEASE.



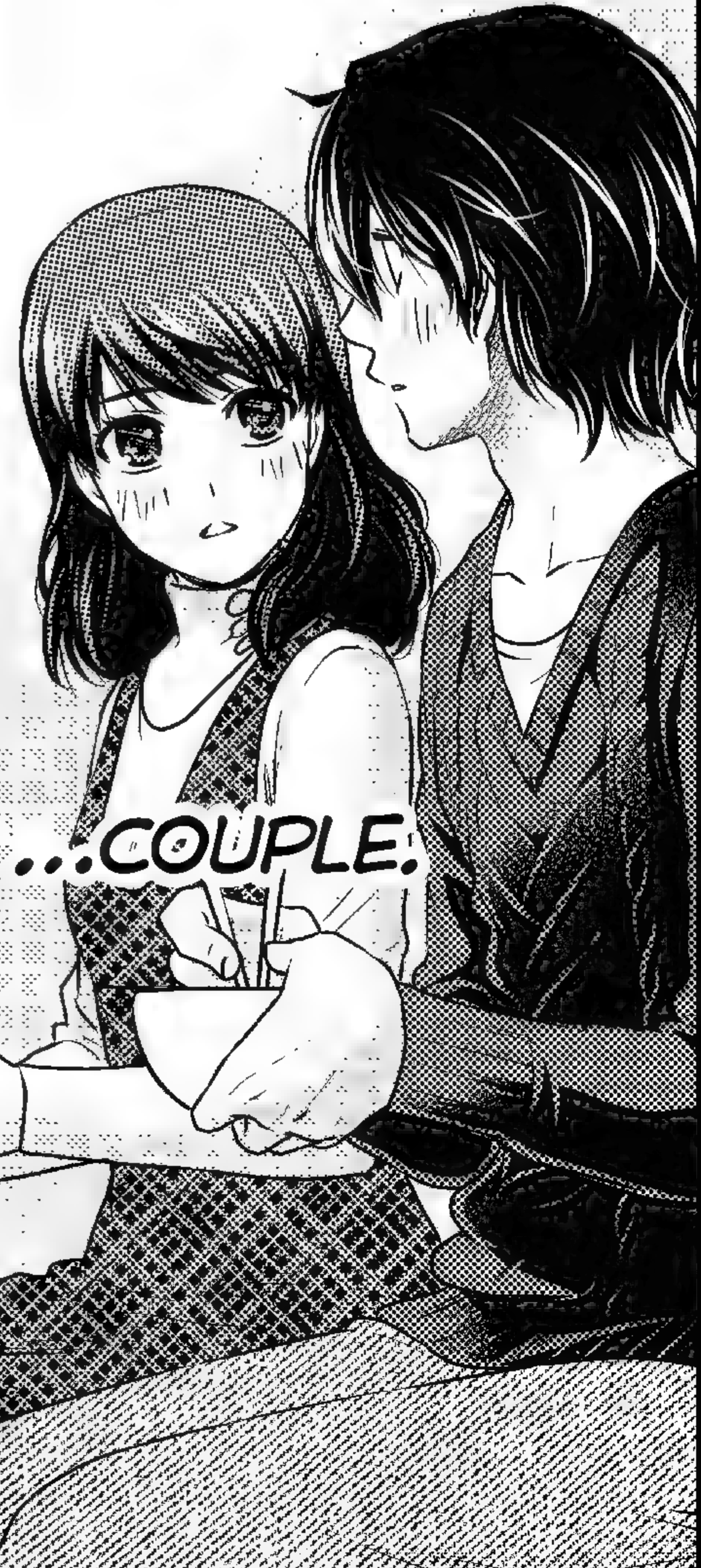
WOULD
YOU CARE
FOR SEC-
ONDS?

I DIDN'T
MEAN TO
MAKE YOU
KIDS LISTEN
TO THIS
OLD GIRL
REMINISCE.

SOR-
RY.



A TRUE...



...COUPLE.

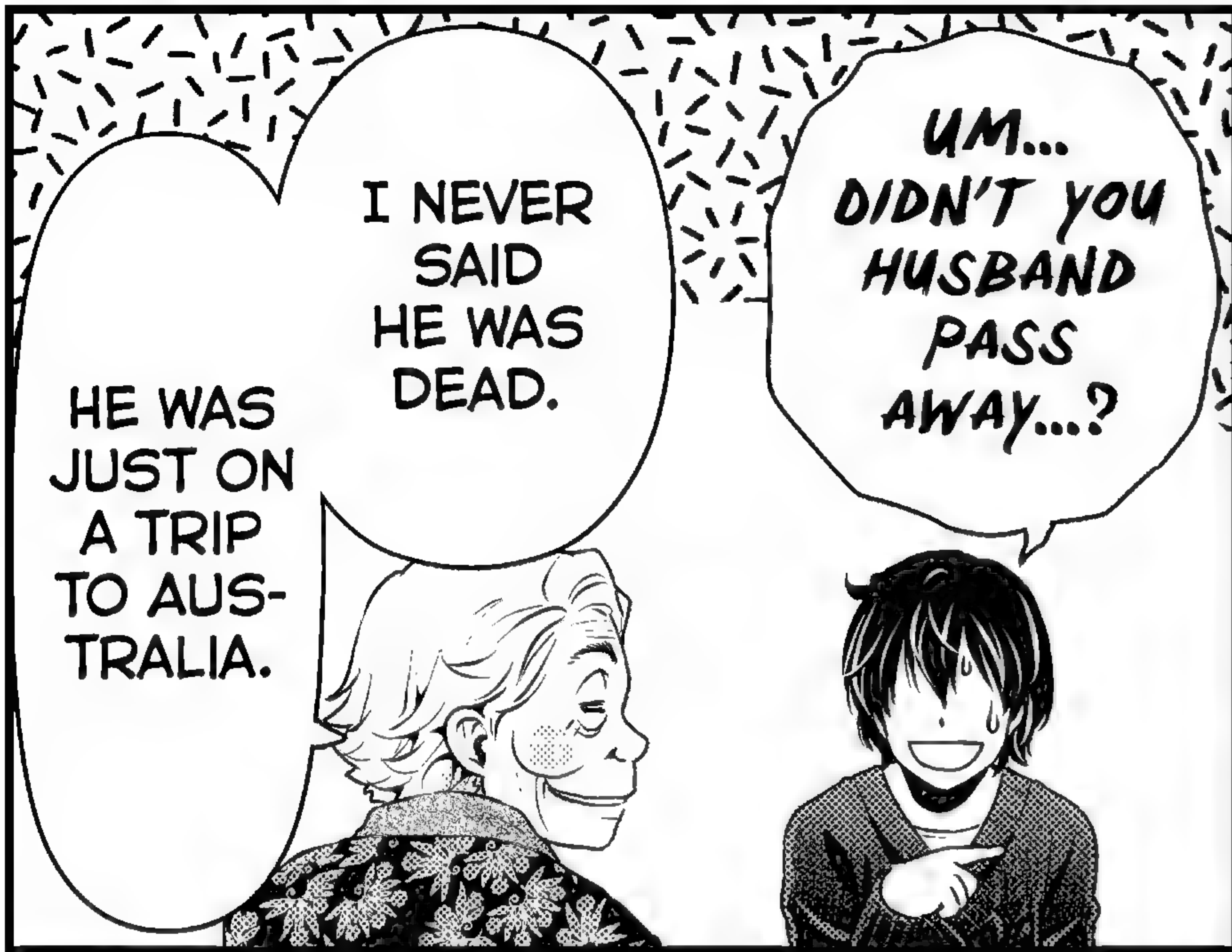


OH,
MY.
THAT'S
VERY
SWEET
OF YOU.



IS THERE
ANYTHING
ELSE WE CAN
DO TO HELP?
I'D LIKE
TO PAY YOU
BACK FOR
EVERYTHING
YOU'VE DONE
FOR US...

THAT
WAS A
LOVELY
STORY.





THAT'S
MORE
LIKE IT.

GOOD,
GOOD.

CHUNK
K



M'KAY!

THAT
DOES IT
FOR THE
DISHES!



...IF SHE
CRASHED
THE PARTY
WHILE
YOU WERE
OUT WITH
FRIENDS.

THOUGH,
I GOTTA
SAY, YOUR
GIRLFRIEND
MUST BE
AWFULLY
JEALOUS
...

NA-



NO,
NO
...

I BET SHE
CHECKS
YOUR PHONE
EVERY DAY,
TOO, HUH?

WELL, I
JUST MEANT
THAT'S ONE
THING THAT
HAPPENED.



GOIN'
OUT WITH
SUCH A
NEEDY
GIRL?

AIN'T IT
GONNA BE
ROUGH...



BUT THAT'S
ALSO WHAT'S
CUTE ABOUT
HER.

'ZAT
RIGHT?



ARE
YOU
DONE
YET?

RUI.



YOU
THINK
SO?



RUI!



HUH?
WHERE'D
SHE
GO?

To Sumi-san,
Thank you for having us.
I'm sorry to say goodbye in a note,
but I'm in a hurry. Though it was
only a night, thank you very
much for your wonderful hospitality.
I will take care of
the bill, so

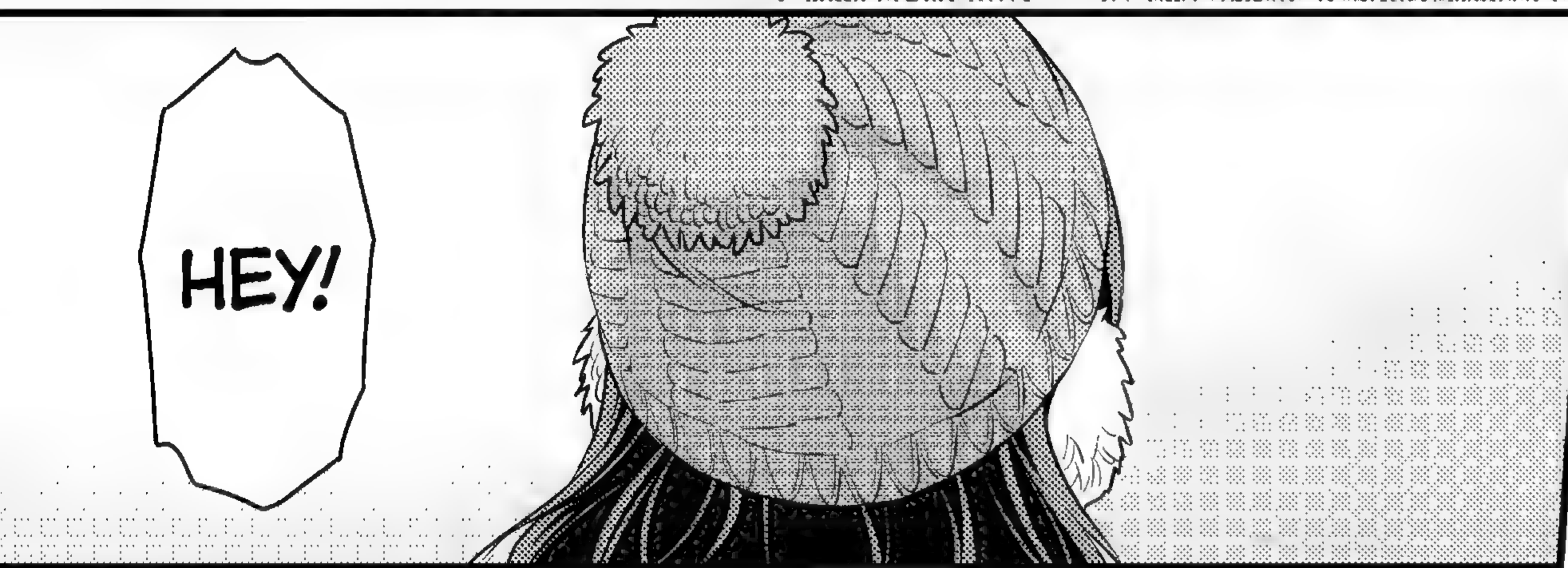
HUH
...?



DASH



CHAPTER 127: PROOF OF LOVE



HEY!



WHERE ARE YOU IN A HURRY TO?

WHAT WAS THAT NOTE ON THE COUNTER ALL ABOUT?

I'M GOING HOME.

WHY ?!



WHERE ARE YOU GOING?!

WHY WOULD YOU LEAVE WITHOUT SAYING ANYTHING?!



SHMP

TO



NEE-

HUH
?!

WHAT
THE HELL
ARE YOU
TALKING
ABOUT?!



SO YOU
CAN JUST
ENJOY THE
REST OF
THE TRIP BY
YOURSELF.

THE
NEEDY
GIRL'S
GOING
TO GET
LOST,



HI
TITCH

I OVER-
HEARD
YOU GUYS
TALKING IN
THE YARD.



I SET IT
STRAIGHT
WITH HIM
AFTER-
WARD,
TOO,
SO...



THERE'S
NO REASON
TO GET SO
UPSET.

HE WAS
JUST
TEASING
ME!

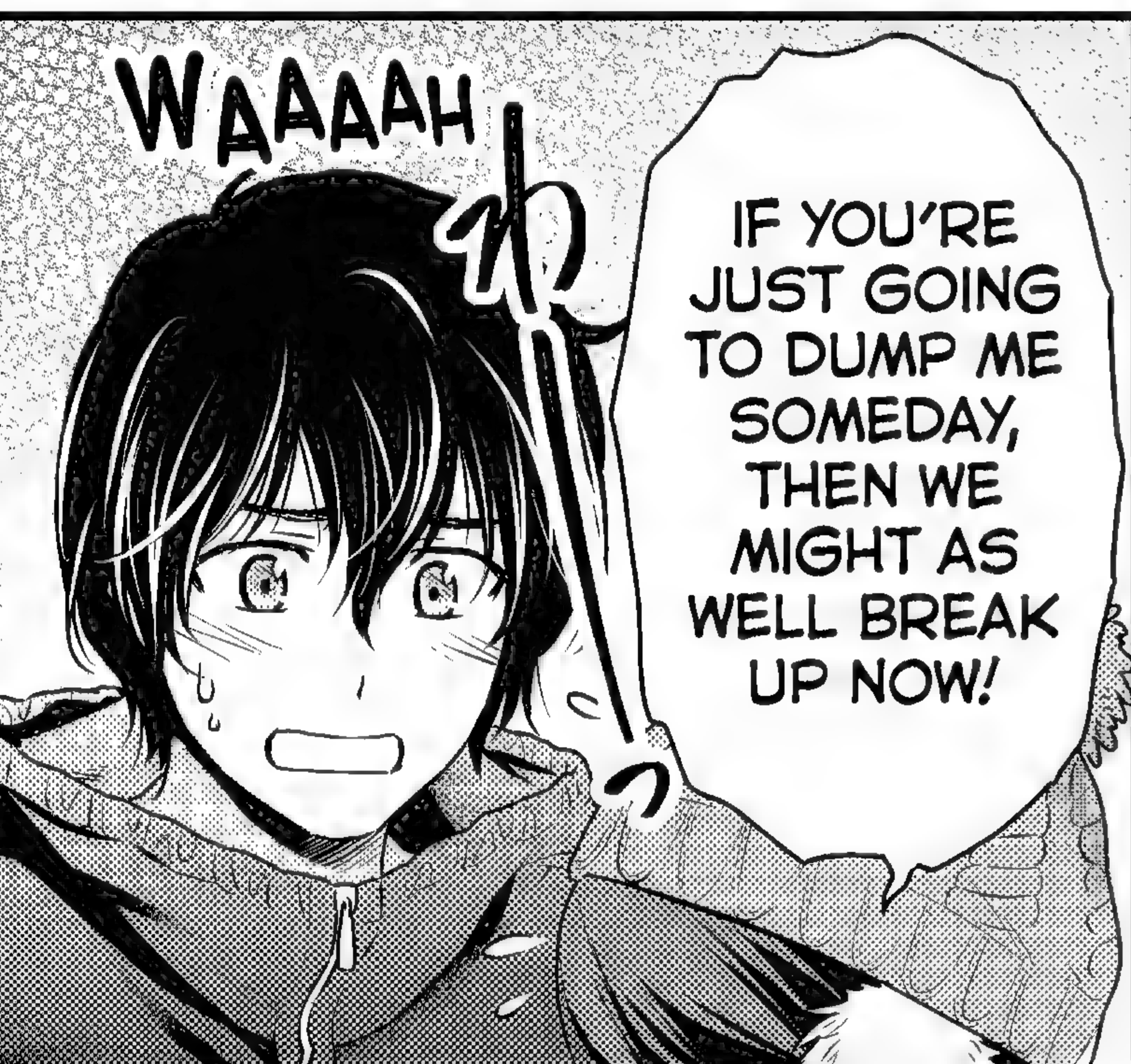


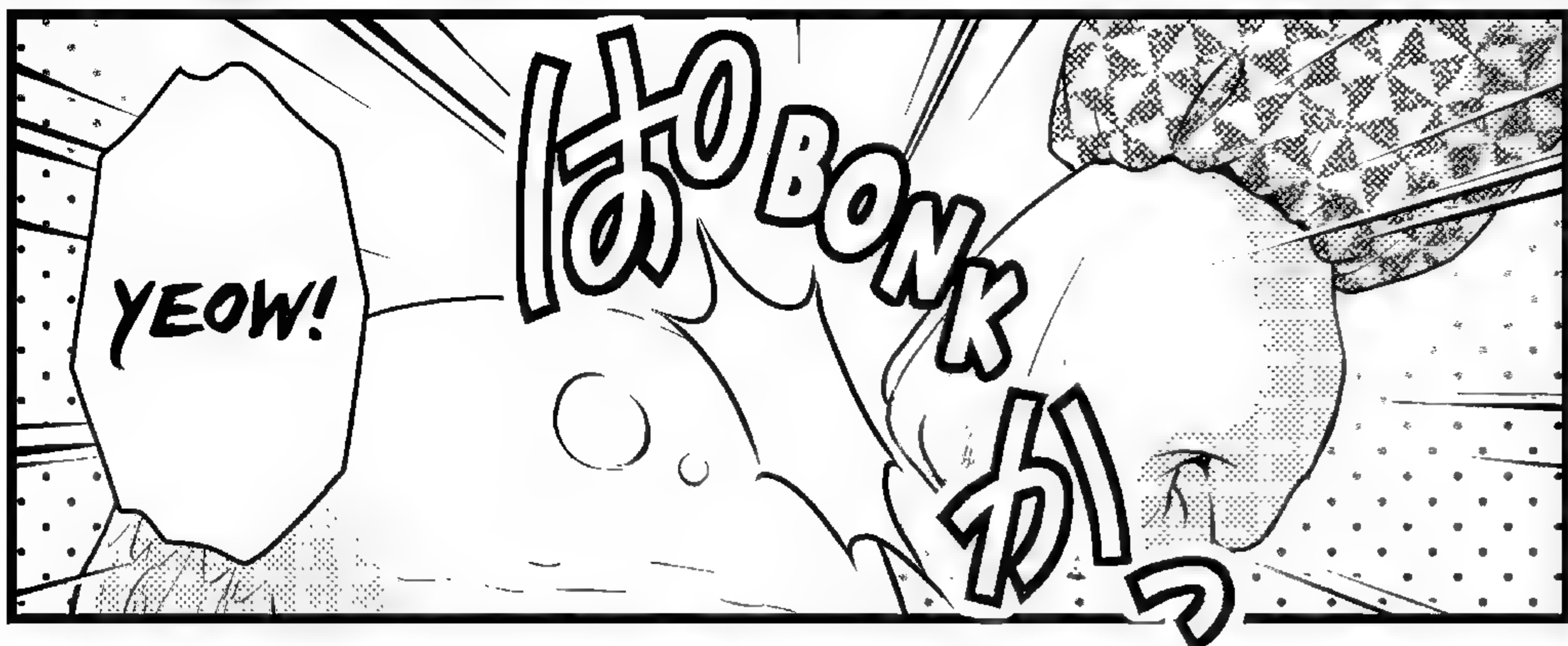
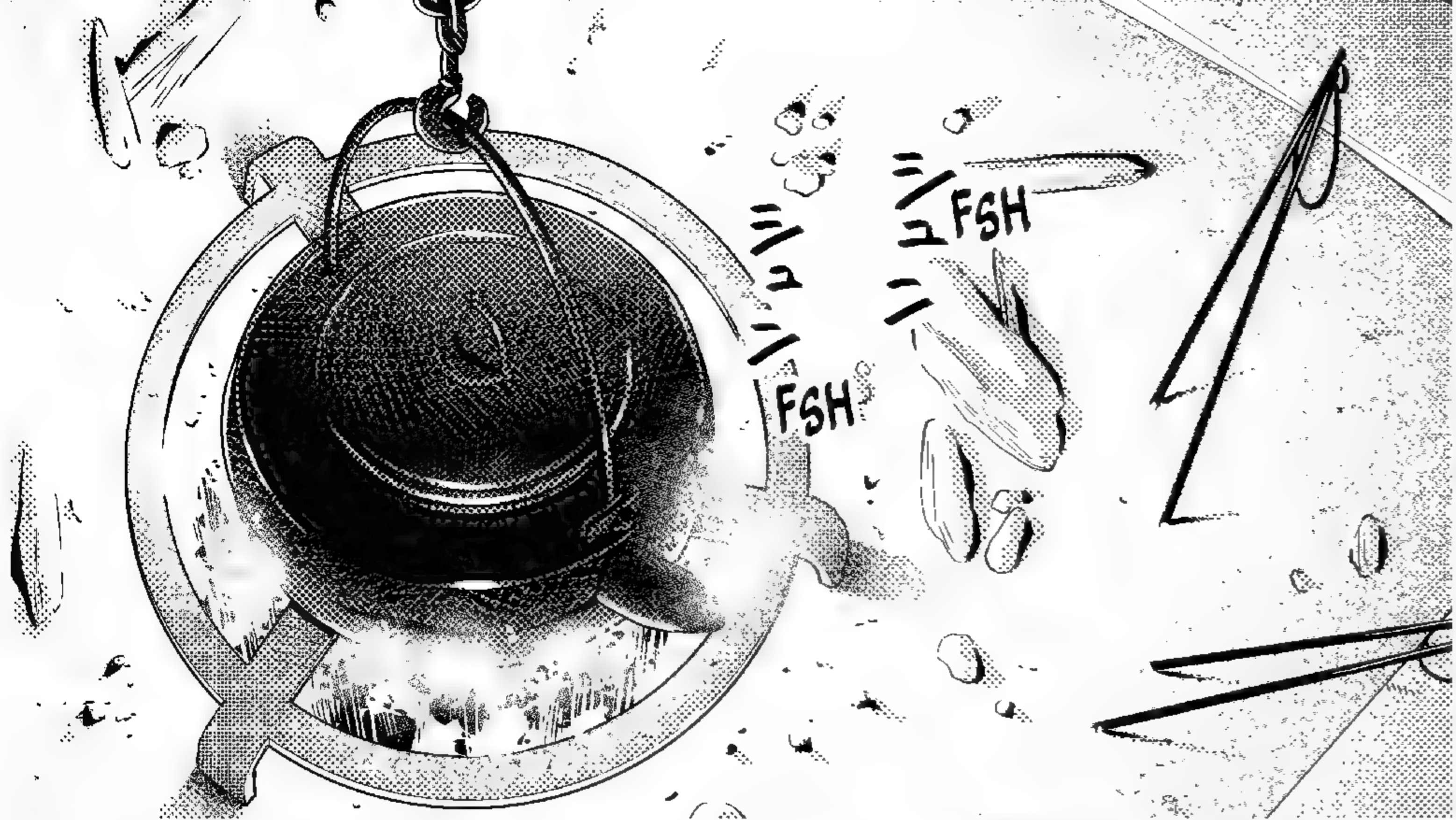
AND
ALL YOU
SAID WAS,
"YOU THINK
SO?"

WAIT
...

HE ASKED
YOU IF IT'S
GOING TO BE
HARD TO GO
OUT WITH SUCH
A NEEDY
GIRL.

WHOA,
WHOA,
WHOA.





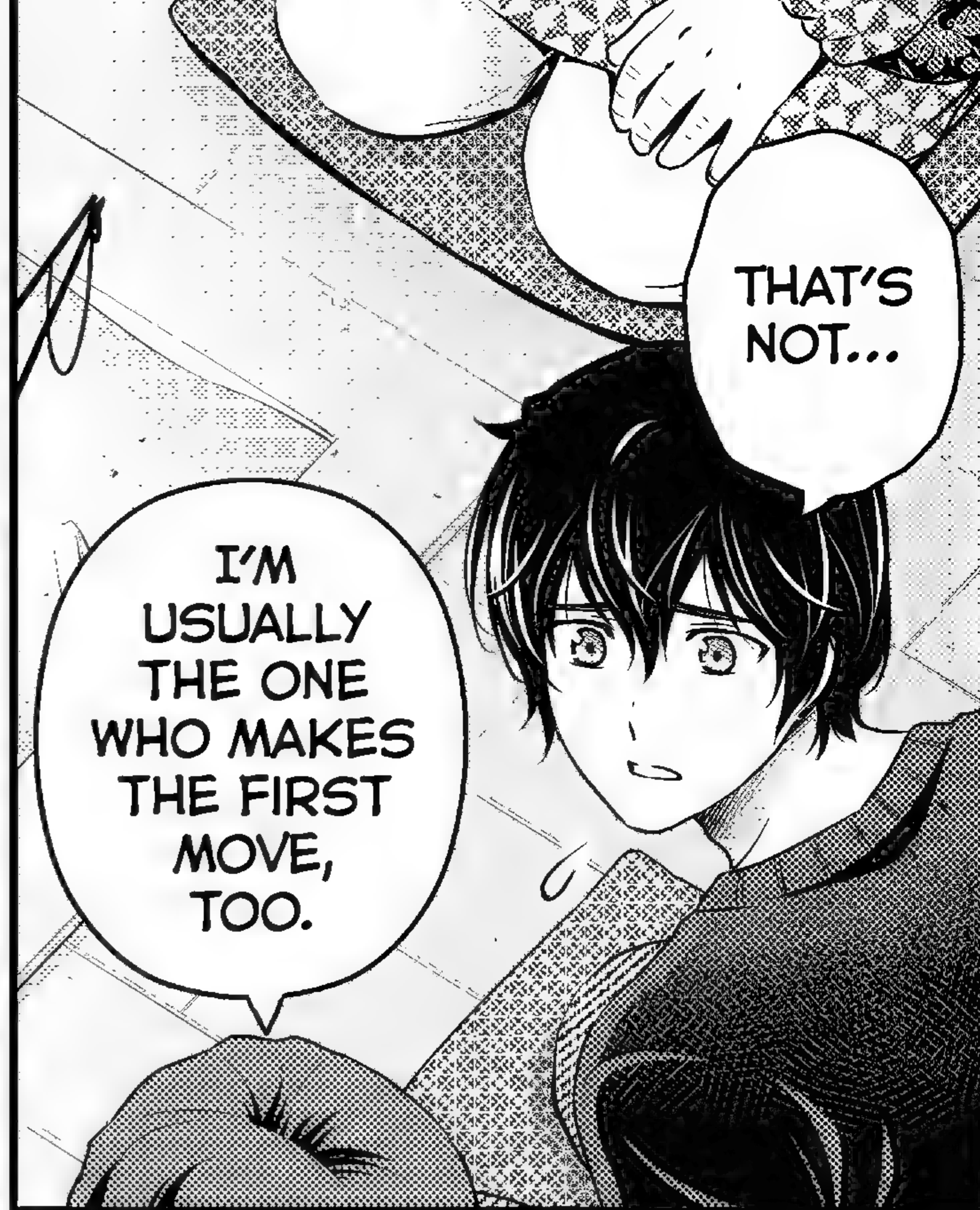


THEN
THERE
WAS LAST
NIGHT'S
BATH.

I HAD TO
BUG YOU
UNTIL WE
WENT ON
OUR FIRST
DATE.

ER...

AND
AFTER-
WARDS.



THAT'S
NOT...

I'M
USUALLY
THE ONE
WHO MAKES
THE FIRST
MOVE,
TOO.



THAT'S A
TOUGHIE
...

G
A
A
A
H!

THE
FIRST TIME WE
HAD SEX AFTER
WE STARTED
GOING OUT
WAS BECAUSE
YOU PRETTY
MUCH GAVE IN
TO PRESSURE,
TOO...



WHY
DON'T
YOU
TWO...

...CLEAN
THE BATH
TOGETH-
ER?



I
KNOW!



IT'S
SOME-
THING
THAT HAS
PLAGUED
THE
MINDS OF
COUPLES
SINCE THE
DAWN OF
TIME.

FOR ONE
THING,
NO TWO
PEOPLE
EVER LOVE
EACH
EQUALLY.

HUH? SHE
SUDDENLY
GOT ALL
SOCIALLY
AWARE.





HUH?

NAH...

SORRY.



AH-

HAH

ARE YOU APOLOGIZING OR BLACK-MAILING ME?

TO MAKE UP FOR IT, I WON'T TELL ANYONE YOU SAID, "THAT RADISH IS TOO SEXY," IN YOUR SLEEP LAST NIGHT.



BUT THIS IS STILL GONNA TAKE A WHILE.

SHE SAID WE ONLY HAD TO DO THE INDOOR BATH,

WE'D BETTER FINISH BEFORE THE TRAIN HOME...



I KNOW WHERE RUI'S COMING FROM.

TO BE HONEST,

I WONDERED IF MAYBE I'M THE ONLY ONE WHO FEELS THIS STRONGLY.



IF YOU DIDN'T HAVE SUCH A MOODY GIRL-FRIEND.

I BET YOU'D ENJOY YOURSELF A LOT MORE...



HUH?



BACK WHEN HINA
AND I FIRST
STARTING
GOING OUT...

CAN I STAY
OVER THIS
WEEKEND?



I'LL
JUST TELL
THEM I'M
STAYING AT
FUMIYA'S.

EVERY-
ONE'LL
WORRY
IF YOU
DON'T GO
HOME.

WHERE'D
THAT
COME
FROM?



WELL,
I JUST MEAN
THAT I WANT
TO SPEND
MORE TIME
TOGETHER...

EVEN
SO.



WE SHOULD
PROBABLY
AVOID DOING
ANYTHING
THAT MIGHT
SEEM
SUSPICIOUS.

I DUNNO...
THERE IS THAT
INCRIMINATING
LETTER ABOUT
KIRIYA-SENSEI
GOING AROUND
RIGHT NOW.



NO?



OKAY...



Y'KNOW?

I'M HAPPY
YOU FEEL
THAT WAY,
BUT...

EVERYONE'S
JUST KIND
OF ON EDGE
RIGHT NOW.



NOW
RUI'S
GOING
THROUGH
THE SAME
THING...



HEY
...



BUT
AT THE
TIME...

...IT FELT
LIKE MY
FEELINGS
WERE
KINDA
ONE-SIDED,
AND IT
HURT.



SO I
MIGHT NOT
BE ABLE
TO ACT
EXACTLY
HOW YOU
WANT.

I'M NOT
EXACTLY
THE MOST
THOUGHTFUL
PERSON,



BUT I'VE
NEVER
THOUGHT
THAT YOU
WERE
NEEDY OR
A PAIN.

NOT
ONCE.

I'M
SORRY IF
I'VE BEEN
MAKING
YOU FEEL
ANXIOUS.

AND
...

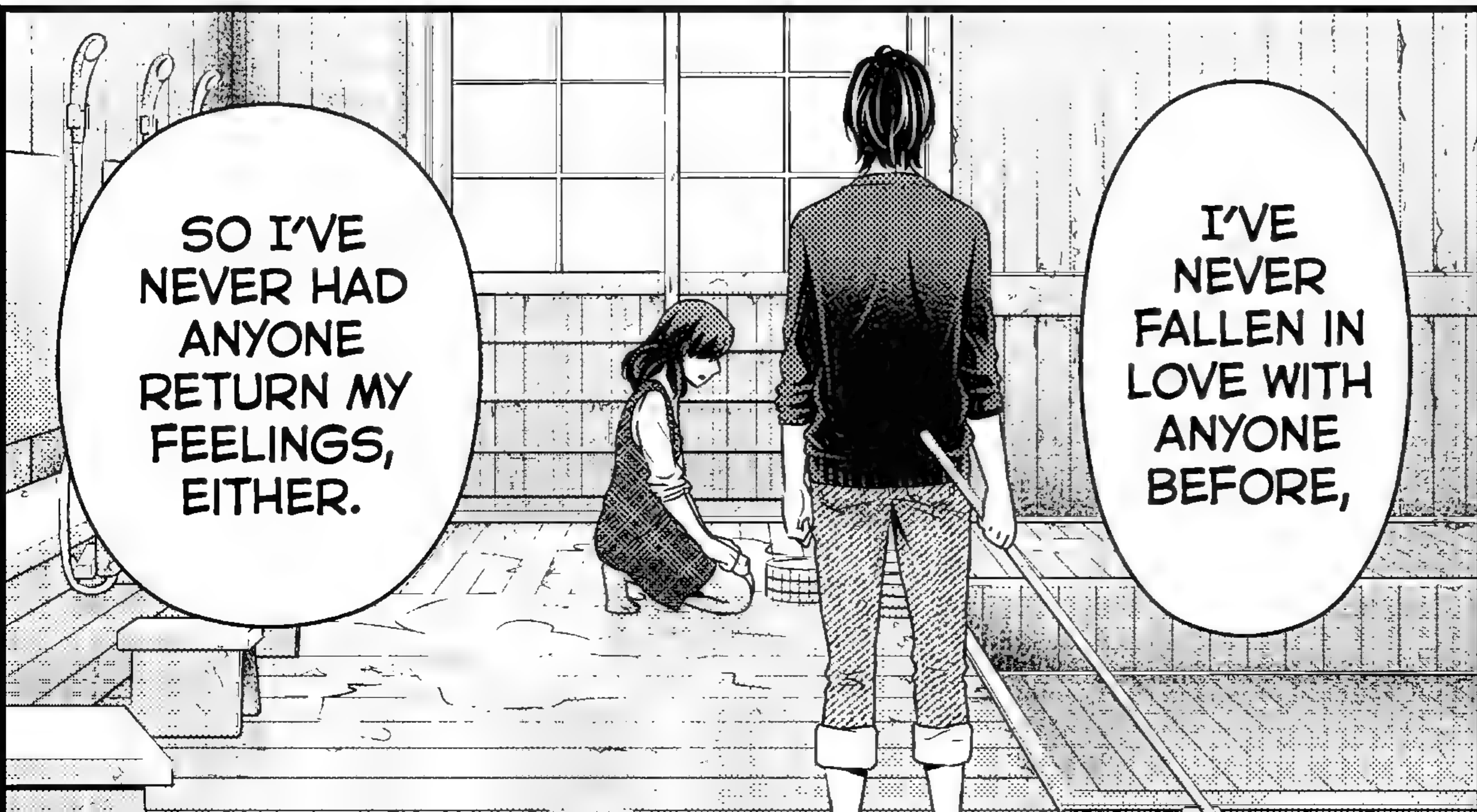


I'M
SCARED.

TO BE
HONEST,

...
TNK

I JUST
WANT
YOU TO
KNOW
THAT.

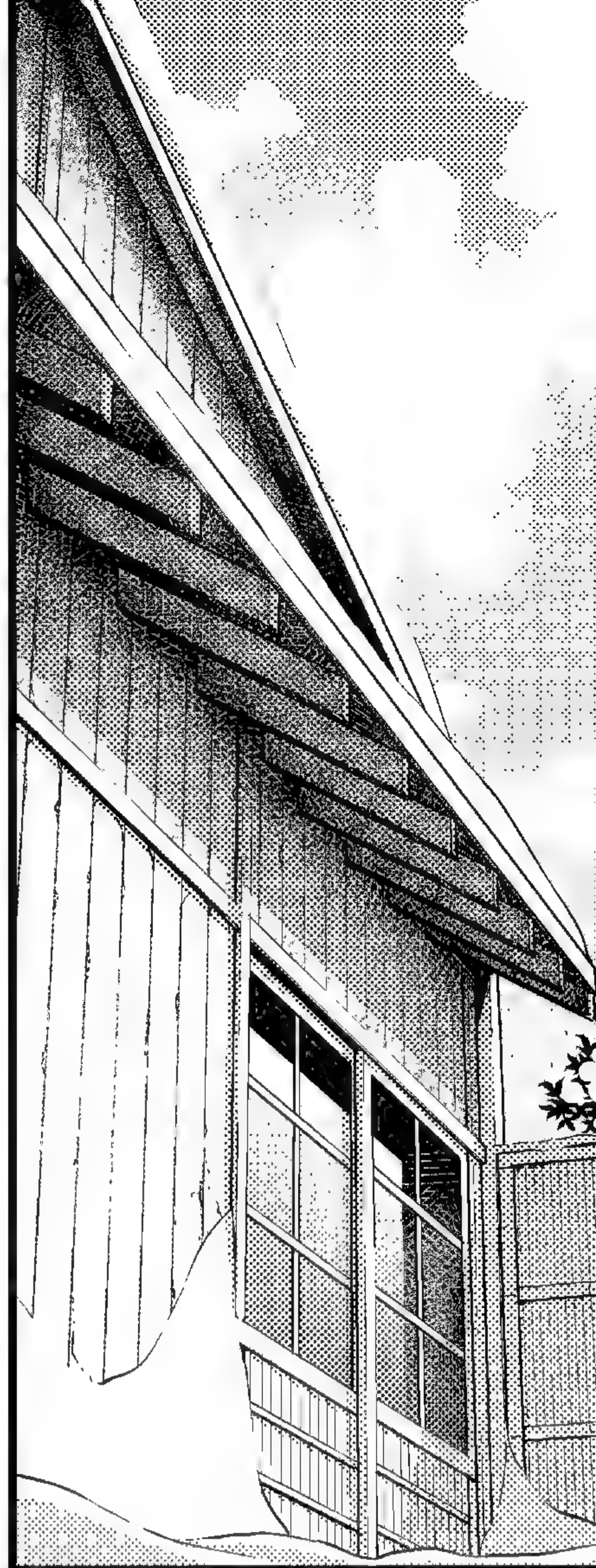


SO I'VE
NEVER HAD
ANYONE
RETURN MY
FEELINGS,
EITHER.

I'VE
NEVER
FALLEN IN
LOVE WITH
ANYONE
BEFORE,









THERE'S
ONLY ONE
WAY TO
GET RID OF
ALL YOUR
DOUBTS
AND
FEARS.

...



**...BY
TRUSTING
ME.**

AND
THAT'S
...



OF THE
TIME WE
SPEND
TOGETHER.

...BE-
CAUSE I
WANTED
TO HAVE A
SYMBOL
...

IF YOUR
FEELINGS
KEEP
GROWING
FROM
NOW ON,



10
4 CLICK

I CHOSE
MATCHING
WATCHES
...

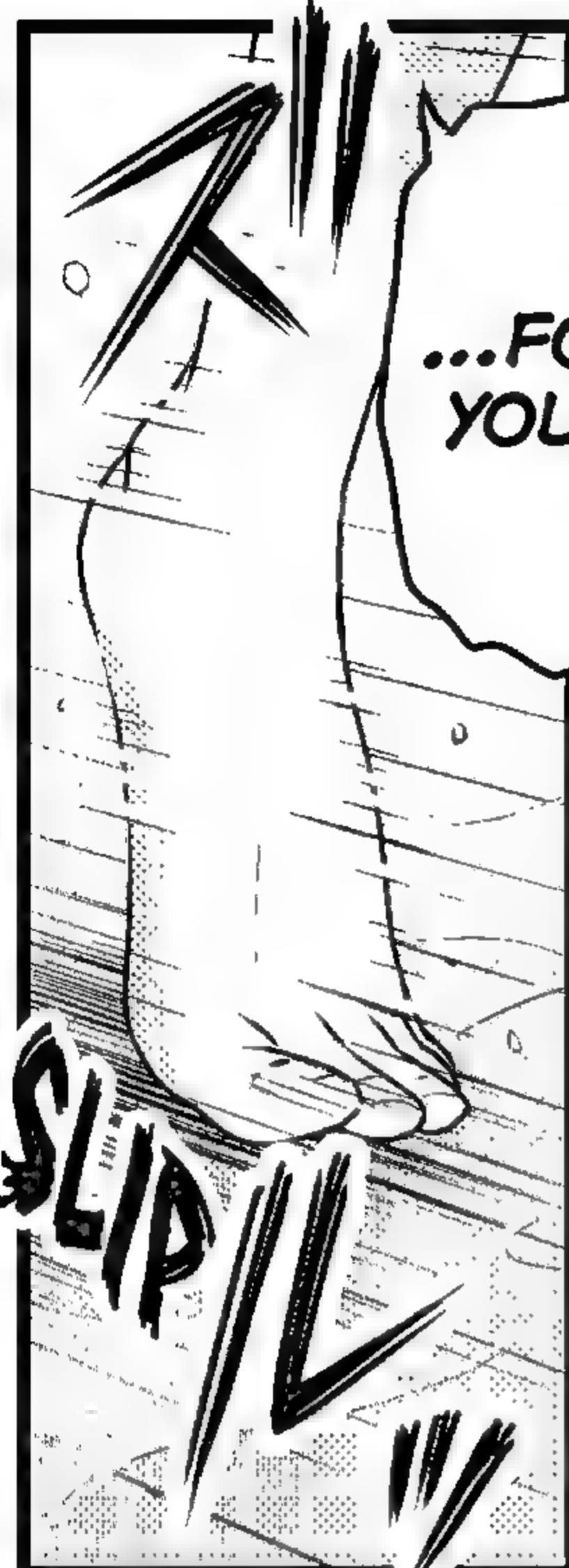


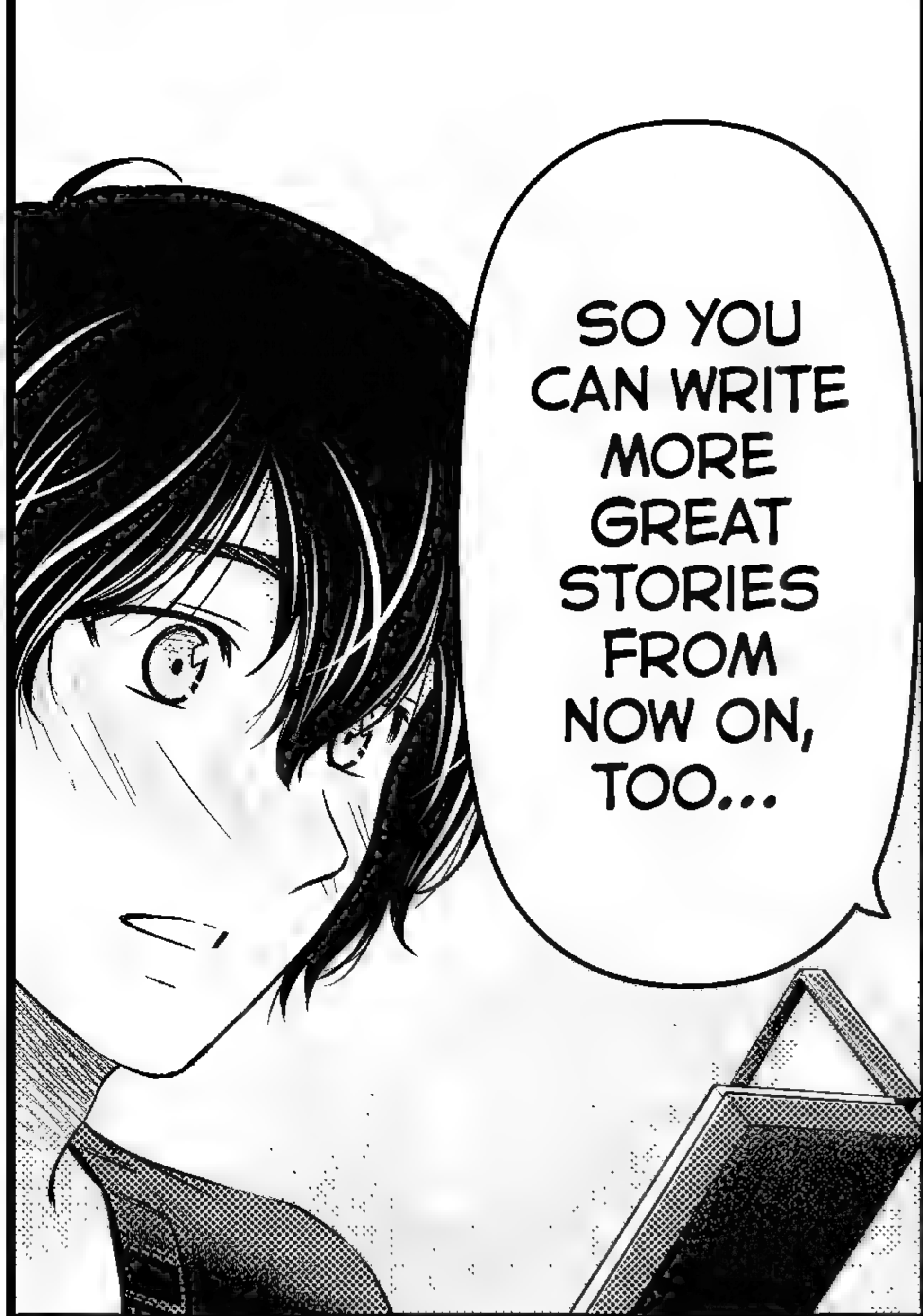
LET
ME
SEE
YOUR
ARM.

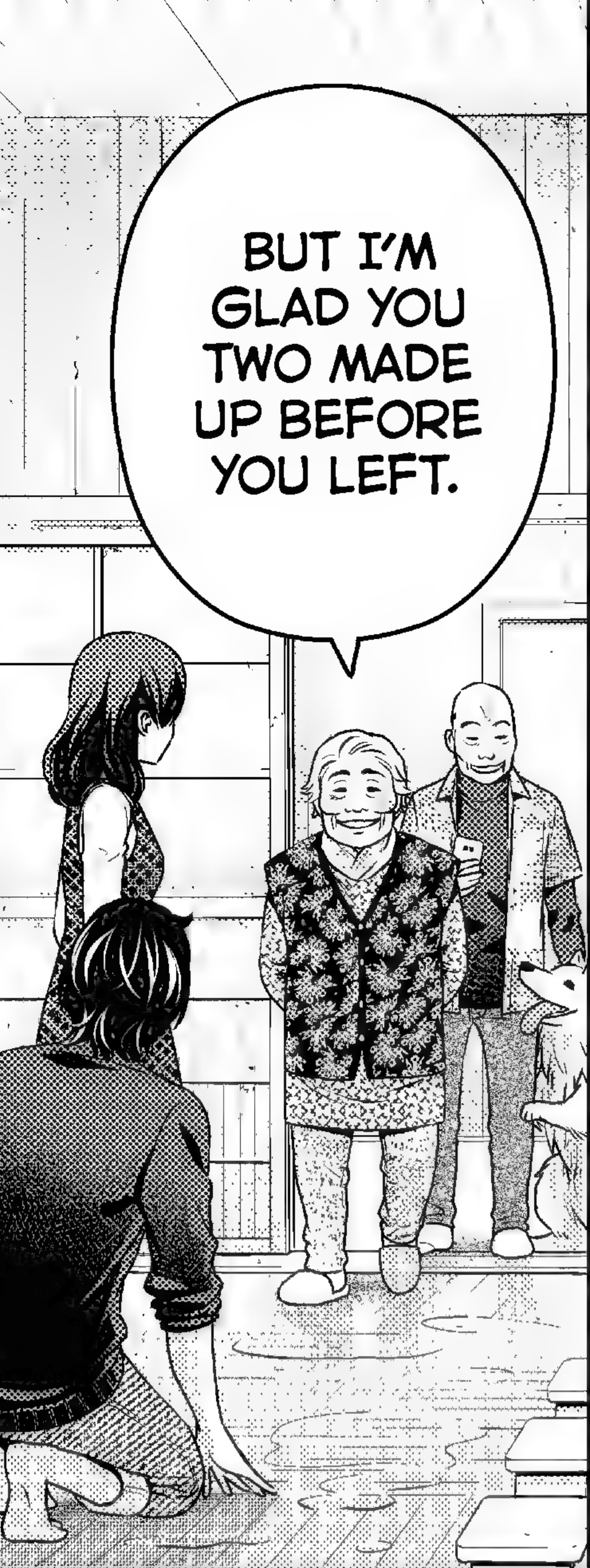


**THEN
WE'LL
JUST HAVE
TO FILL
YOUR
HEART...**

**...BY
BEING
TOGETHER
EVEN
MORE,
RIGHT?**







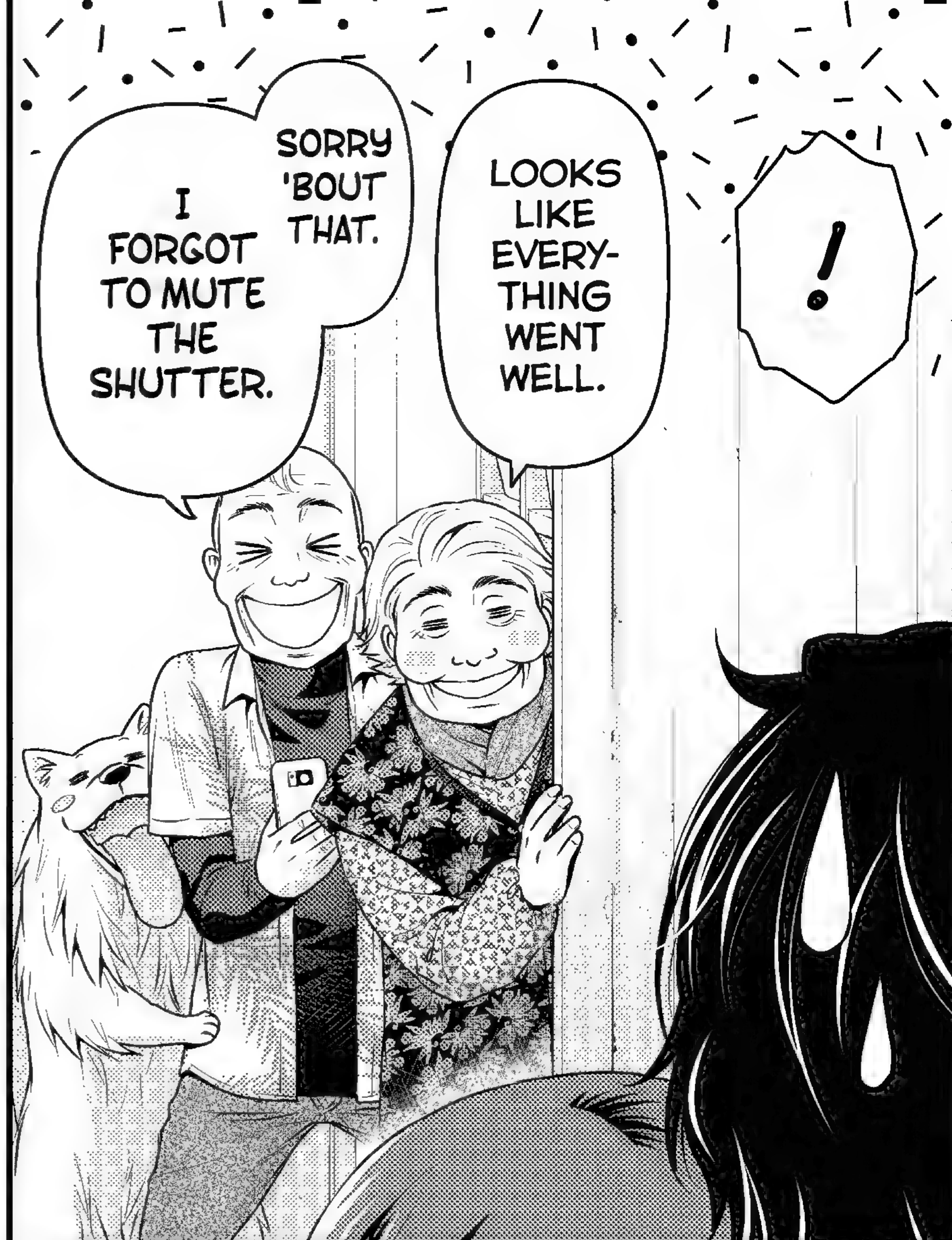
BUT I'M
GLAD YOU
TWO MADE
UP BEFORE
YOU LEFT.



I'LL
GET
THE
FUTONS
READY.

WANNA
STAY
ANOTHER
NIGHT?

NO,
THANK
YOU!



I
FORGOT
TO MUTE
THE
SHUTTER.

SORRY
'BOUT
THAT.

LOOKS
LIKE
EVERY-
THING
WENT
WELL.

!

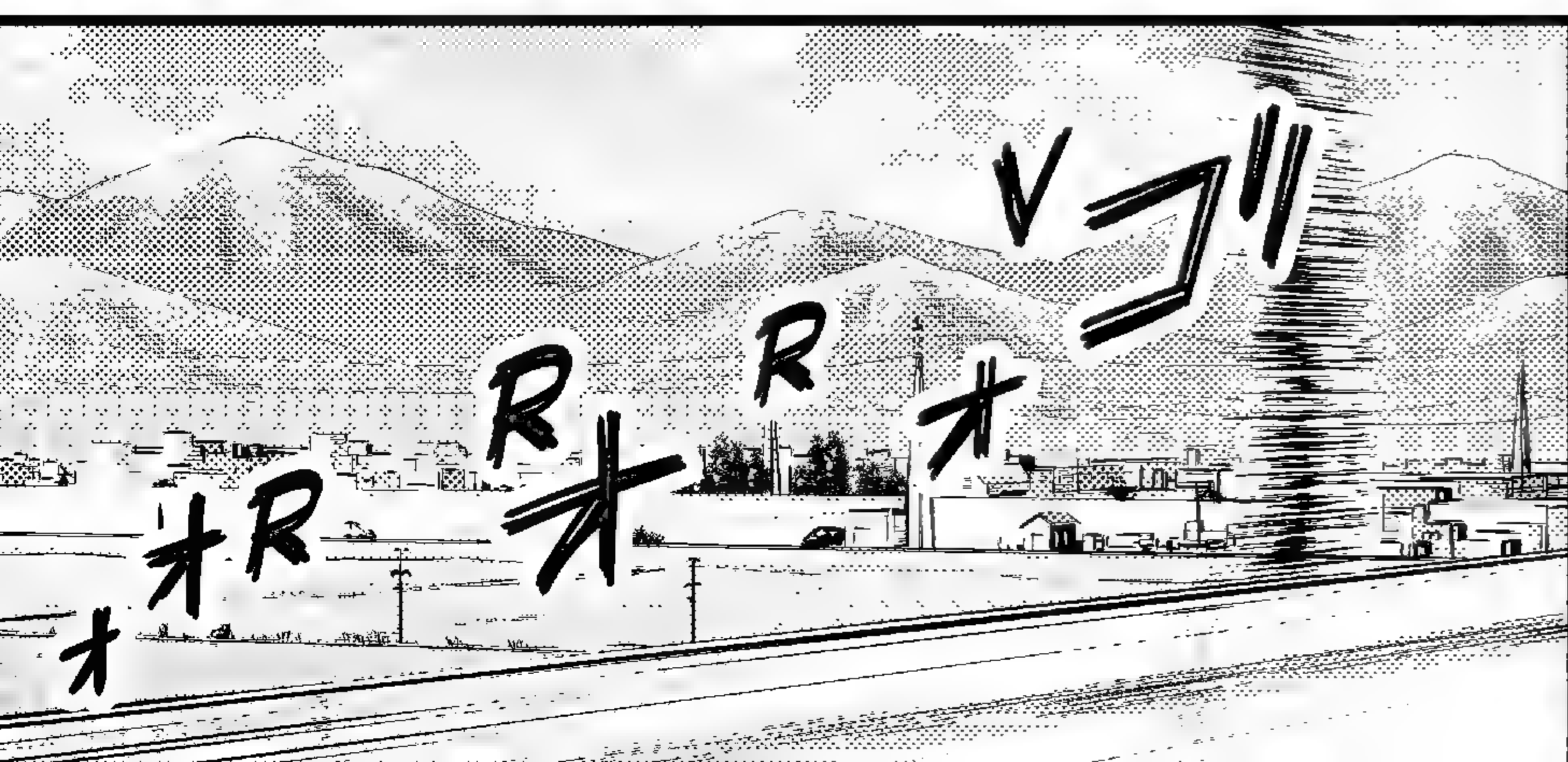


BUT
THAT'S
THE KEY
TO A
SMOOTH
RELATION-
SHIP.

IT
SOUNDS
SIMPLE,



WOOF
WOOF



IF YOU'RE
EVER AT A
LOSS OVER
SOME-
THING
HOPELESS,

IT'S
BEST
TO JUST
GET
UP AND
MOVE.

MOVING
AROUND
TOGETHER
WILL HELP
YOU COOL
DOWN AND
BE MORE
CONSIDERATE
OF EACH
OTHER.



BE-
SIDES
...

ツ
ツ
ツ
TUG
TUG

I WAS
LOOKING
FORWARD TO
SPENDING
CHRISTMAS
WITH YOU A
LOT MORE,
ANYWAY.

IT'S
FINE.



IT'S TOO
BAD WE
DIDN'T GET
TO GO TO
THE DAZAI
MUSEUM
YOU WERE
LOOKING
FORWARD TO,
THOUGH.

A LOT
HAPPENED,
BUT IT
WAS A
FUN TRIP.



KISS
ツ

ツ



KISS
ツ
ツ

SURE.

KISS
ME
AGAIN.

CAN I
MAKE
ONE LAST
REQUEST
BEFORE
WE GET
BACK?

ARE
YOU
GONNA
KEEP
ASKING
UNTIL
WE'RE
HOME?


A
G-A-I-N.




WE CAN
ALWAYS
FIND THE
TIME...

TO
COME
BACK
AGAIN,
RIGHT?

DOMEGIRL 4-PANEL THEATER



IGLOO





MOUNTAIN WITCH



PEACEFUL.

CHAPTER 128: PEACH CAMOUFLAGE



SIGN: GROCERY STORE



HE'S BEEN ON EDGE ALL THE TIME LATELY.

UH-OH ...

MY YOUNGEST IS TAKING ENTRANCE EXAMS THIS YEAR.



I SWEAR, IT FEELS LIKE I'M WALKING ON EGG-SHELLS!



NATSUO-KUN'S STUDYING HARD.

I WONDER IF...



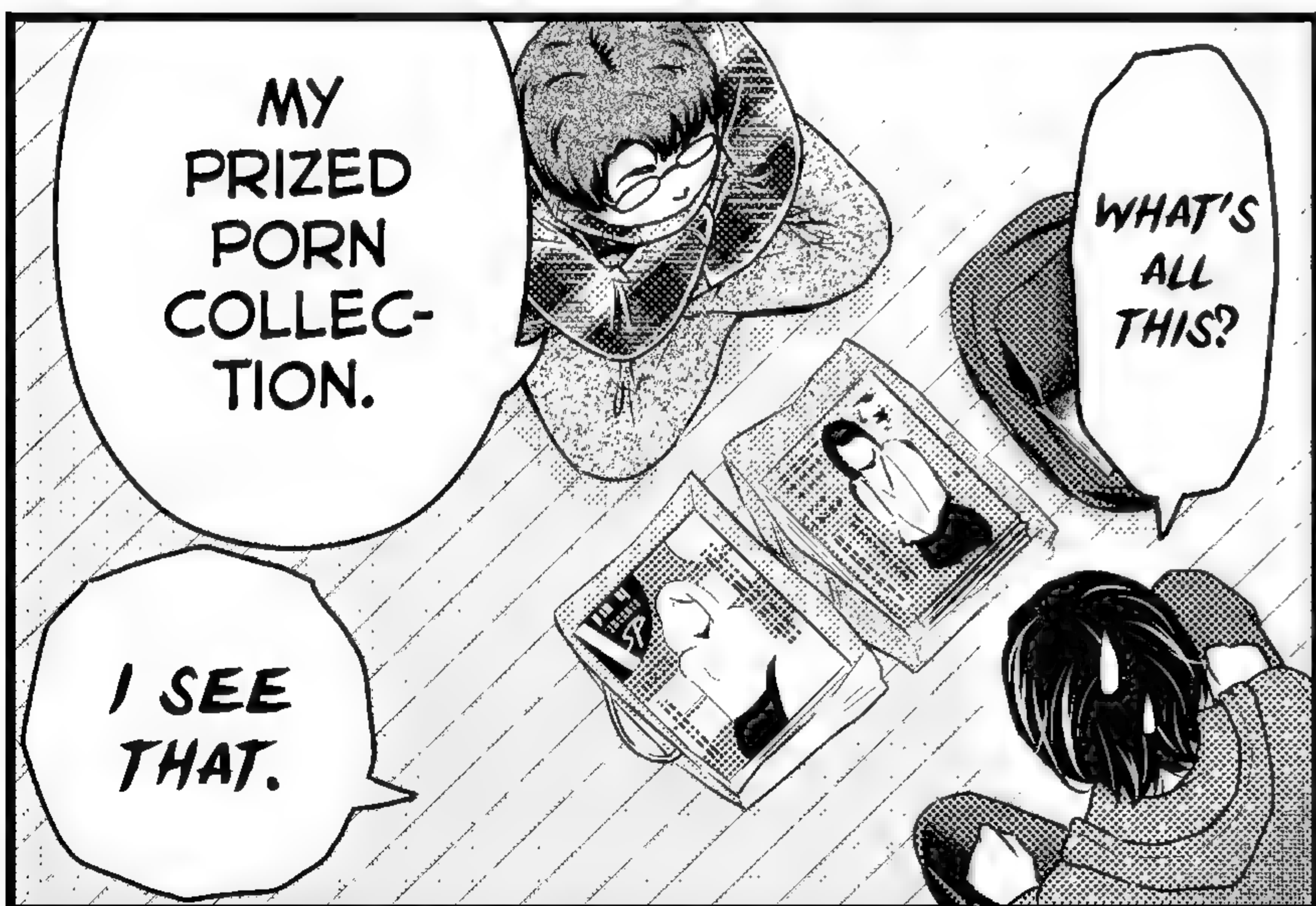
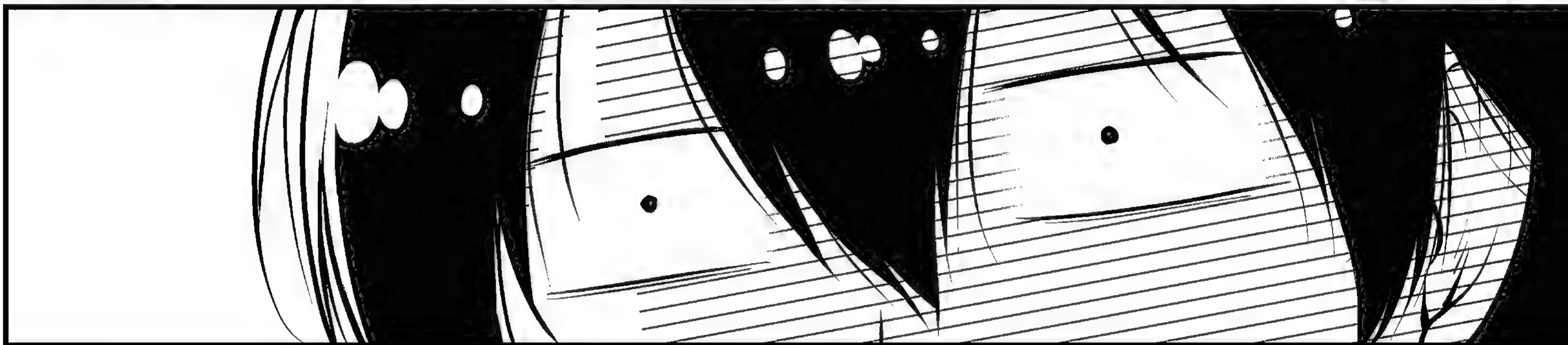
THE OTHER DAY, HE THREATENED TO RUN AWAY JUST BECAUSE I DROPPED A MANDARIN.

*CENTER TEST: A TYPE OF STANDARDIZED TEST USED FOR UNIVERSITY ADMISSIONS IN JAPAN.



IT WON'T BE LONG UNTIL THE CENTER TEST* ONCE THE NEW YEAR STARTS.







HEY!
GET BACK
HERE!

TMP TRUMP

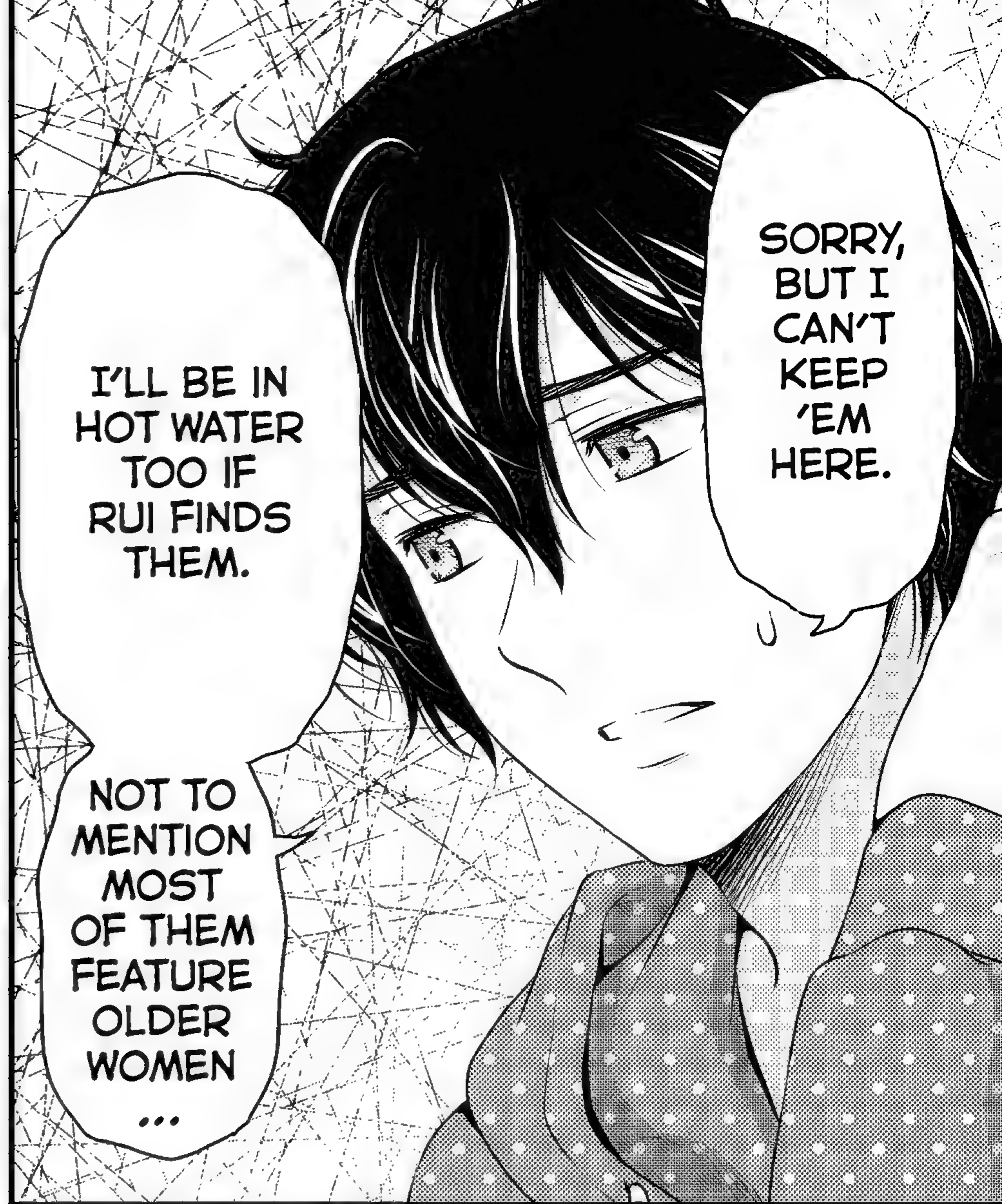
TMP



ALL RIGHT.
I'M
COUNTING
ON YOU.

THANKS
FOR THE
SOUVENIR.

HUH
...?



SORRY,
BUT I
CAN'T
'EM
HERE.

I'LL BE IN
HOT WATER
TOO IF
RUI FINDS
THEM.

NOT TO
MENTION
MOST
OF THEM
FEATURE
OLDER
WOMEN
...



WH-
WHAT AM
I SUP-
POSED TO
DO WITH
THESE?

WH-

...



I'M
GATHERING
UP TRASH.
BRING ME
YOURS IF
YOU HAVE
ANY.

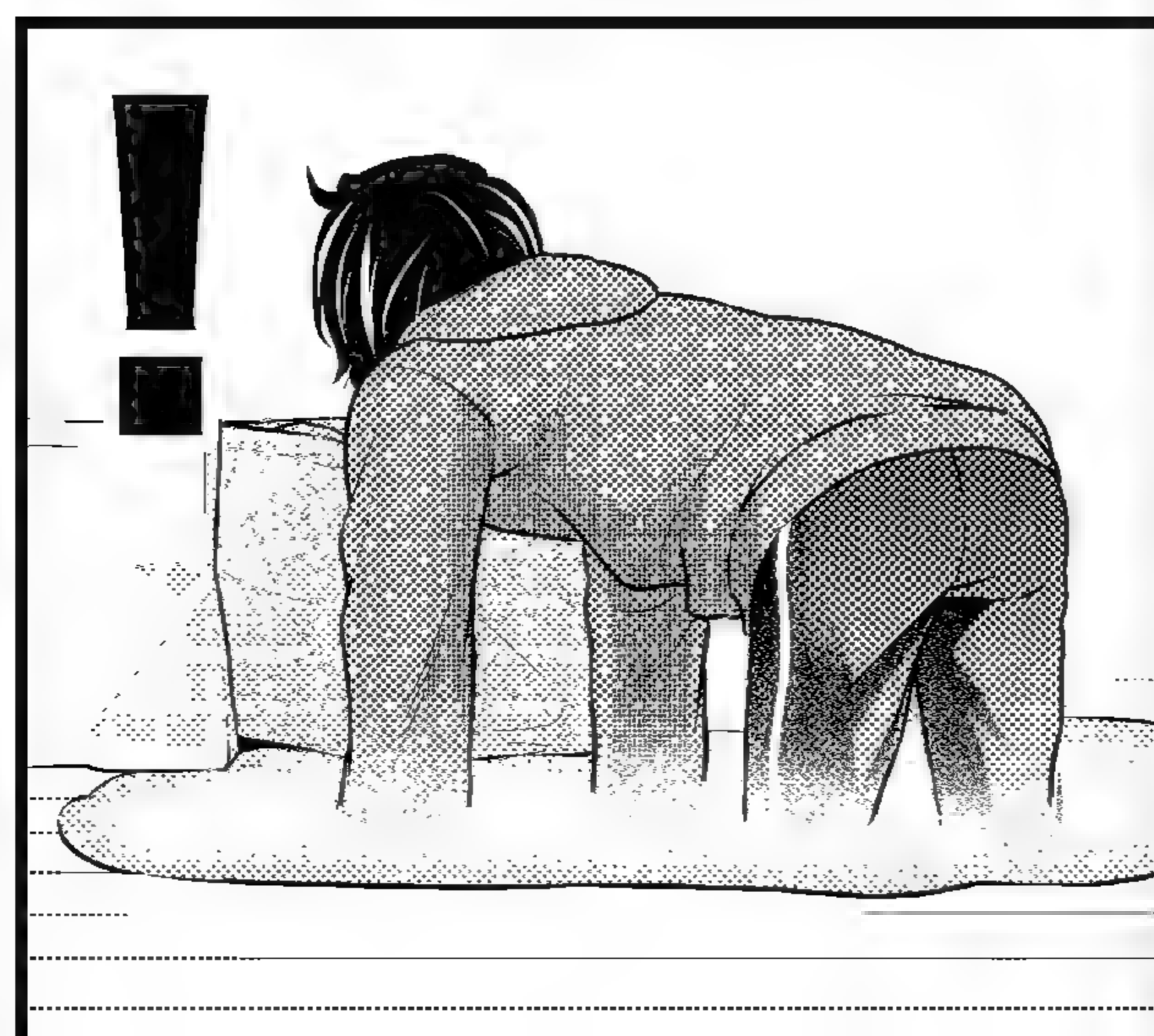
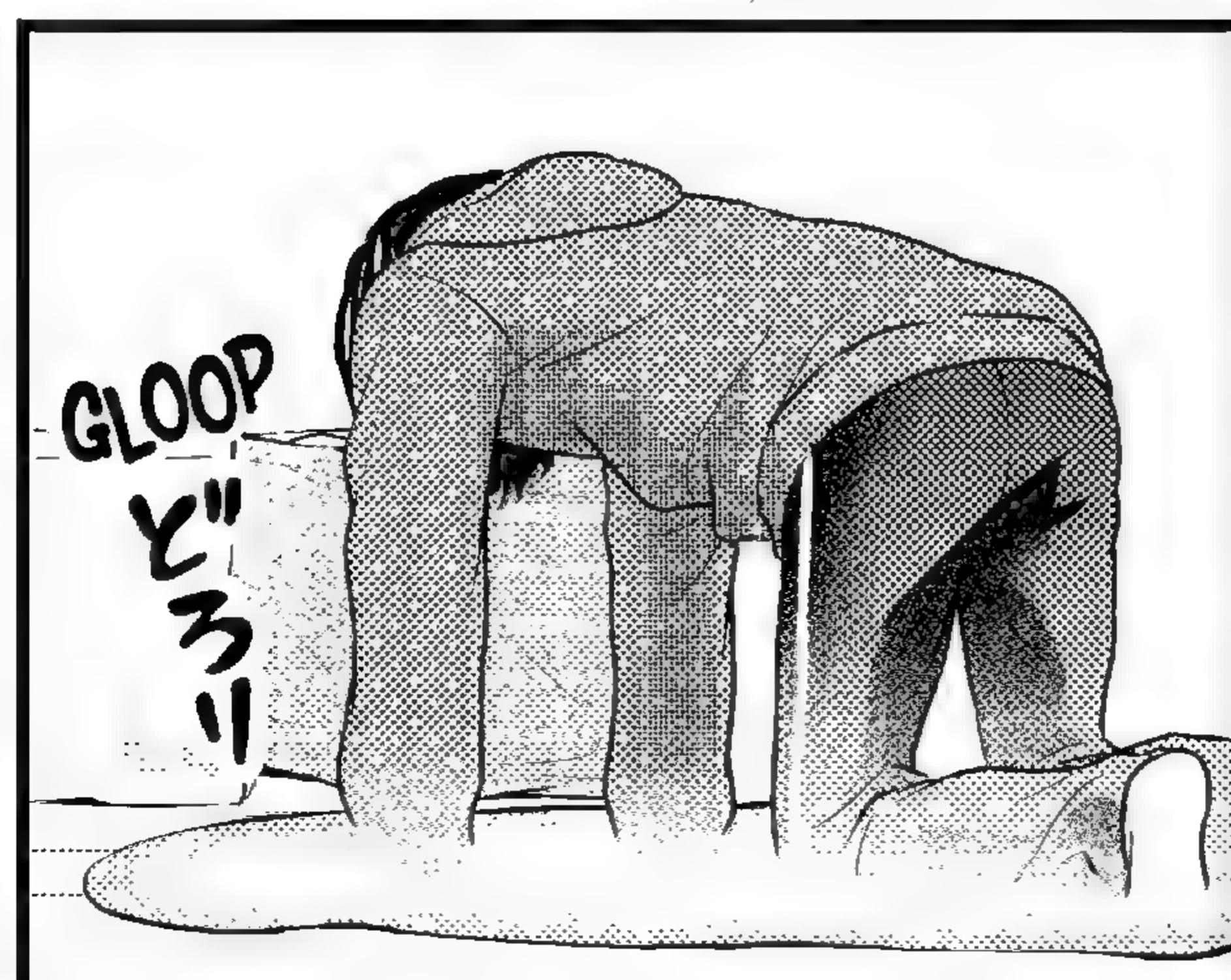
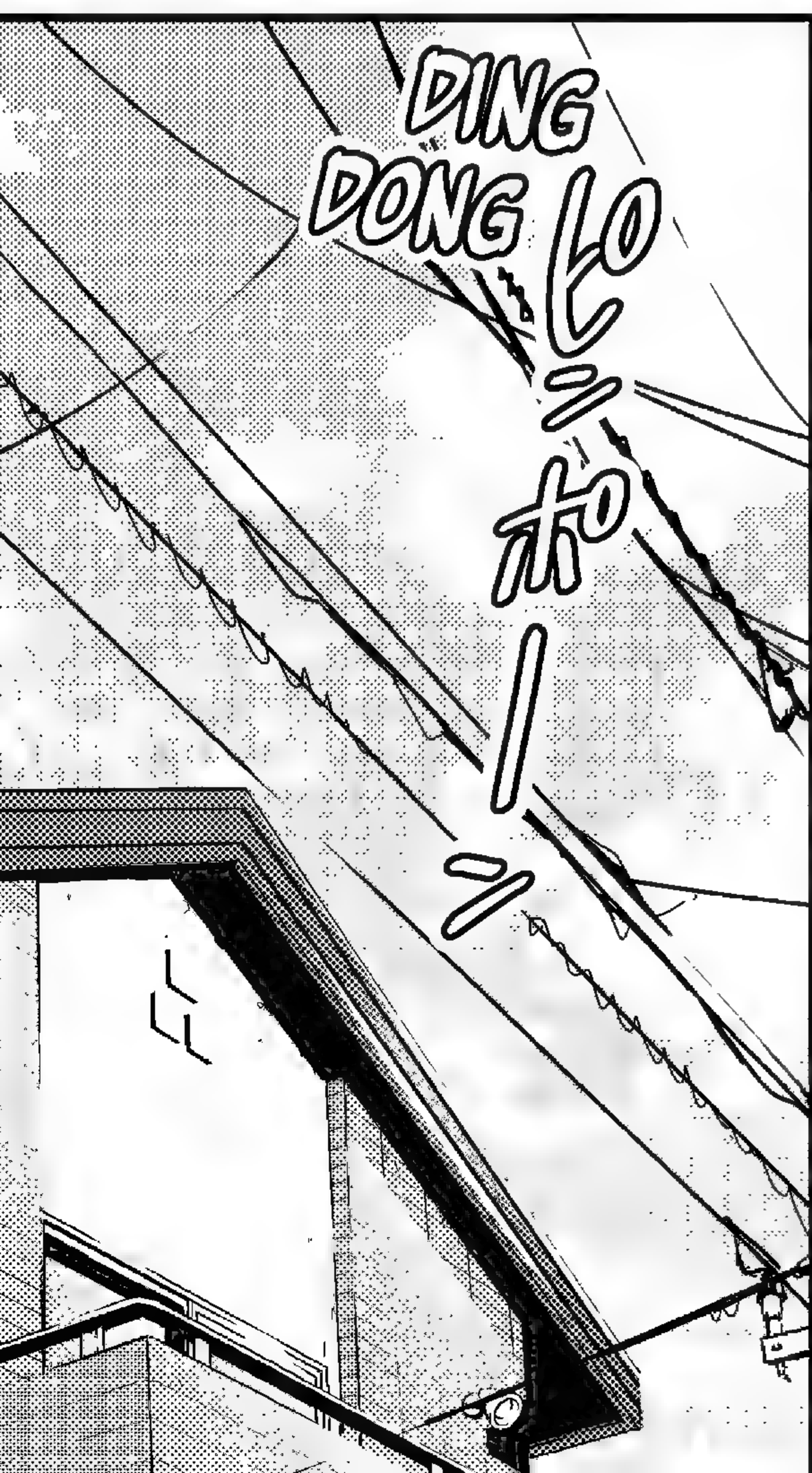
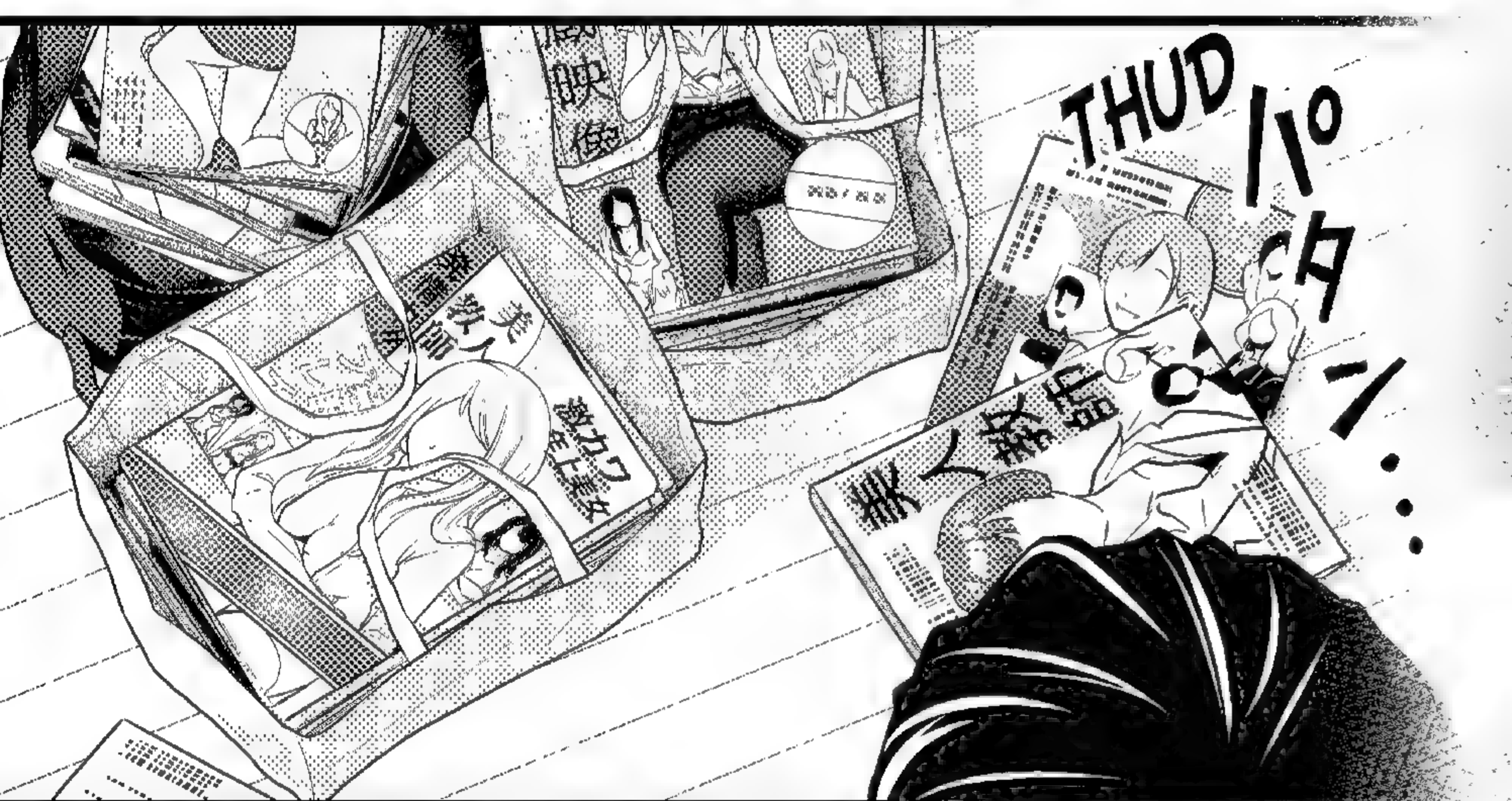
OH, YEAH.
WH-WHAT'S
UP?

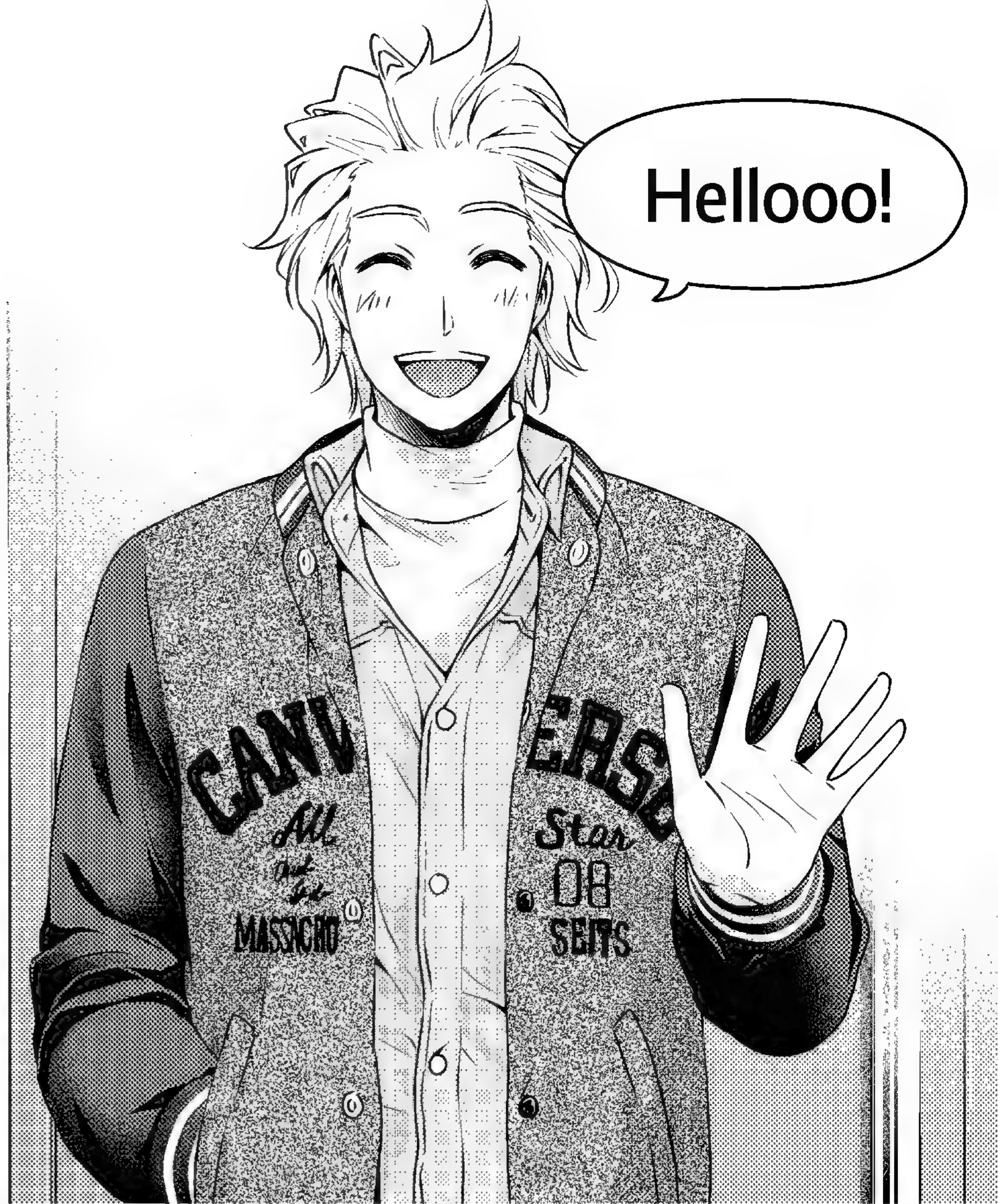
DID
FUMIYA-
KUN
LEAVE
ALREADY
?

TRASH
...?



NAT-
SUO!











WHAAT?!

OH, NAT-CHAN AND RUI-CHAN ARE STEPSIBLINGS.

YOU CERTAINLY DROPPED THAT BOMB-SHELL LIKE IT WAS NOTHING ...



UM... TACHIBANA-SEMPAI LET US IN JUST NOW. DON'T TELL ME YOU'RE ALREADY LIVING TOGETHER...

WHO ARE YOU CALLING COM-RADE?



...TO TAKE THESE HOME WITH YOU FOR THE TIME BEING.

I'D LIKE BOTH OF YOU...



I'VE CALLED YOU HERE TODAY BECAUSE I HAVE A FAVOR TO ASK.

FORGET ABOUT THAT FOR NOW.

A FAVOR?



YOU'LL TAKE THEM?!

I CAN'T TAKE THEM ALL, BUT I'LL DO WHAT I CAN.

A COMRADE IN NEED IS A COMRADE INDEED!



WHAT'S WITH THIS PILE OF PORN MAGS?!

YOU'RE FREE TO PERUSE THEM IN THE MEANWHILE, OF COURSE.



PORN
STASHES ARE
NOT FOUND,

BUT
MADE!

IF YOU'RE
ASKING
WHETHER OR
NOT I HAVE
ANYWHERE TO
HIDE THEM,
THEN THAT'S
A FOOLISH
QUESTION.



YOU TOOK
THEM PRETTY
CONFIDENTLY

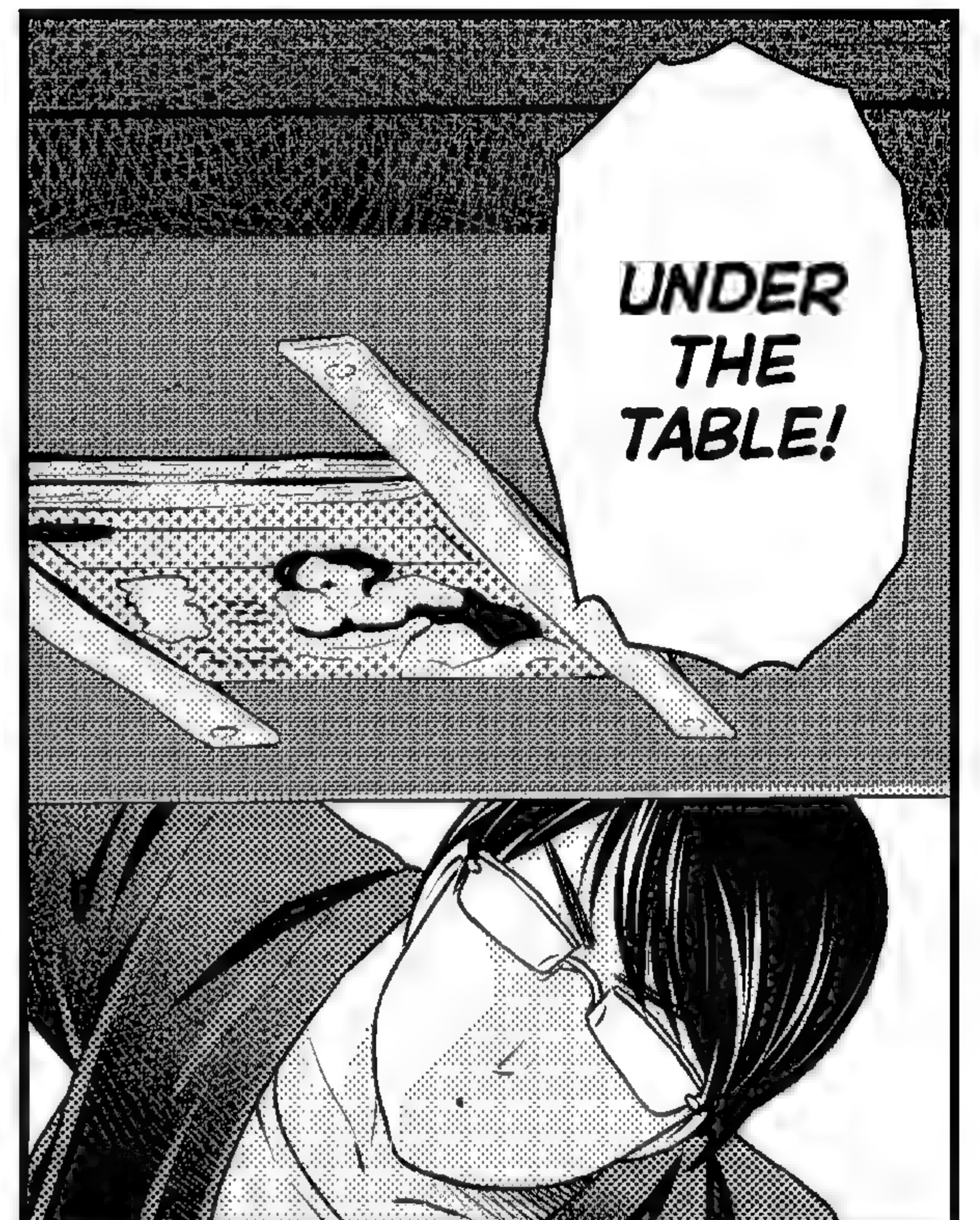
ARE YOU
SURE,
BARUSU?
DON'T YOU
HAVE AN
OLDER
SISTER?



IN THE
CASE OF AN
ENCYCLO-
PEDIA!



IN A
FALSE-
BOTTOM
DRAWER!



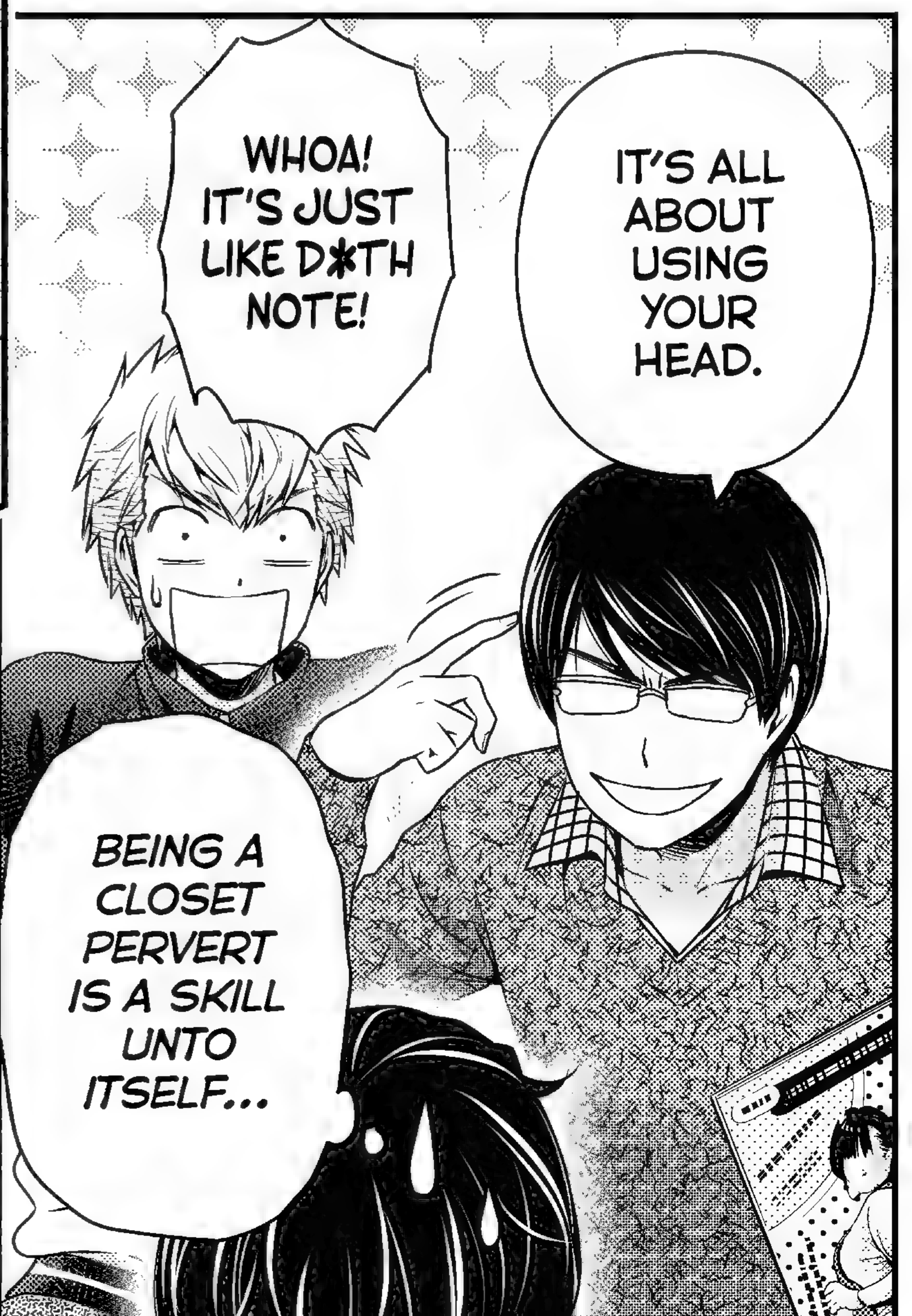
UNDER
THE
TABLE!



I'M
OFF.

ALL
RIGHT.

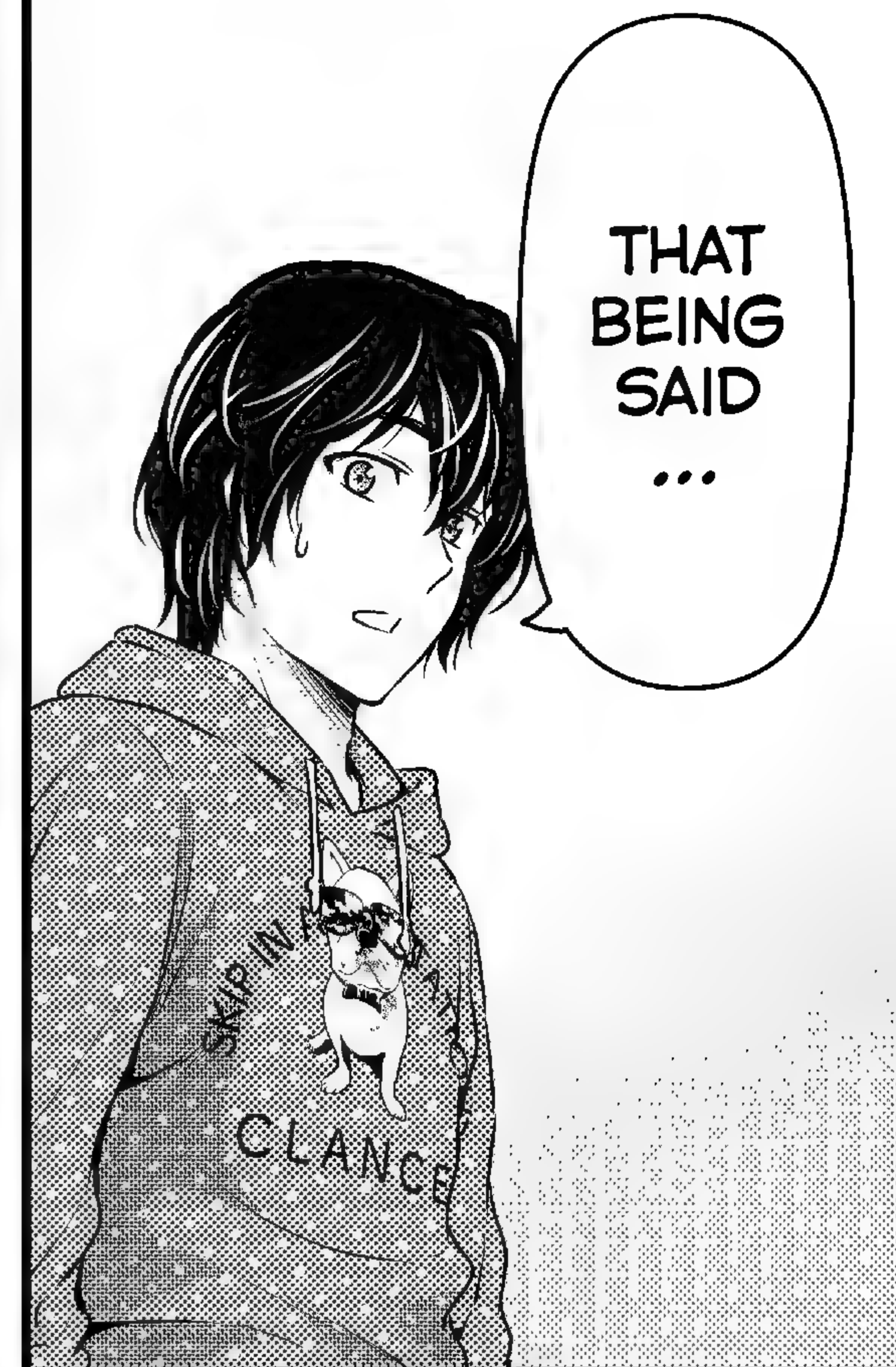
GOD-
SPEED!

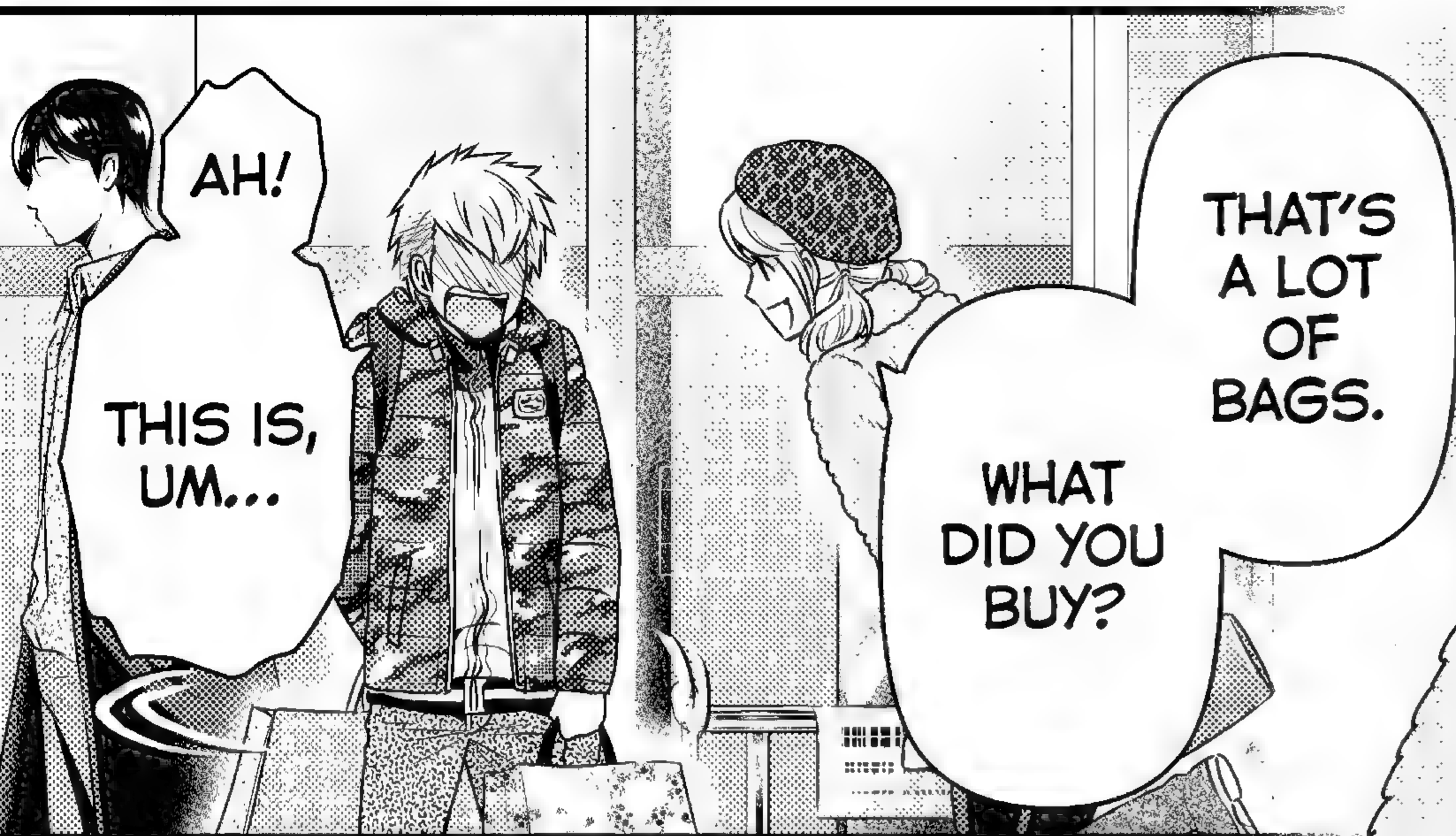


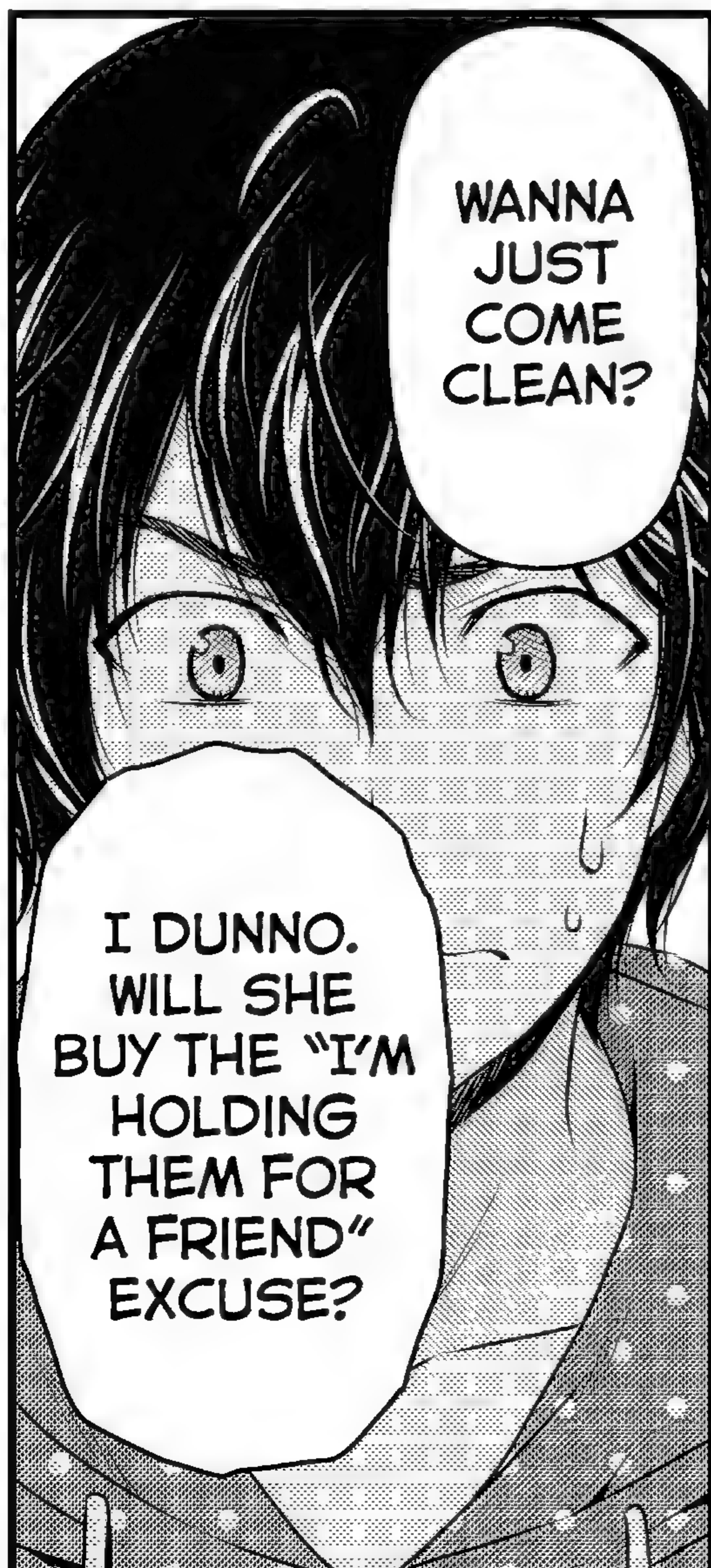
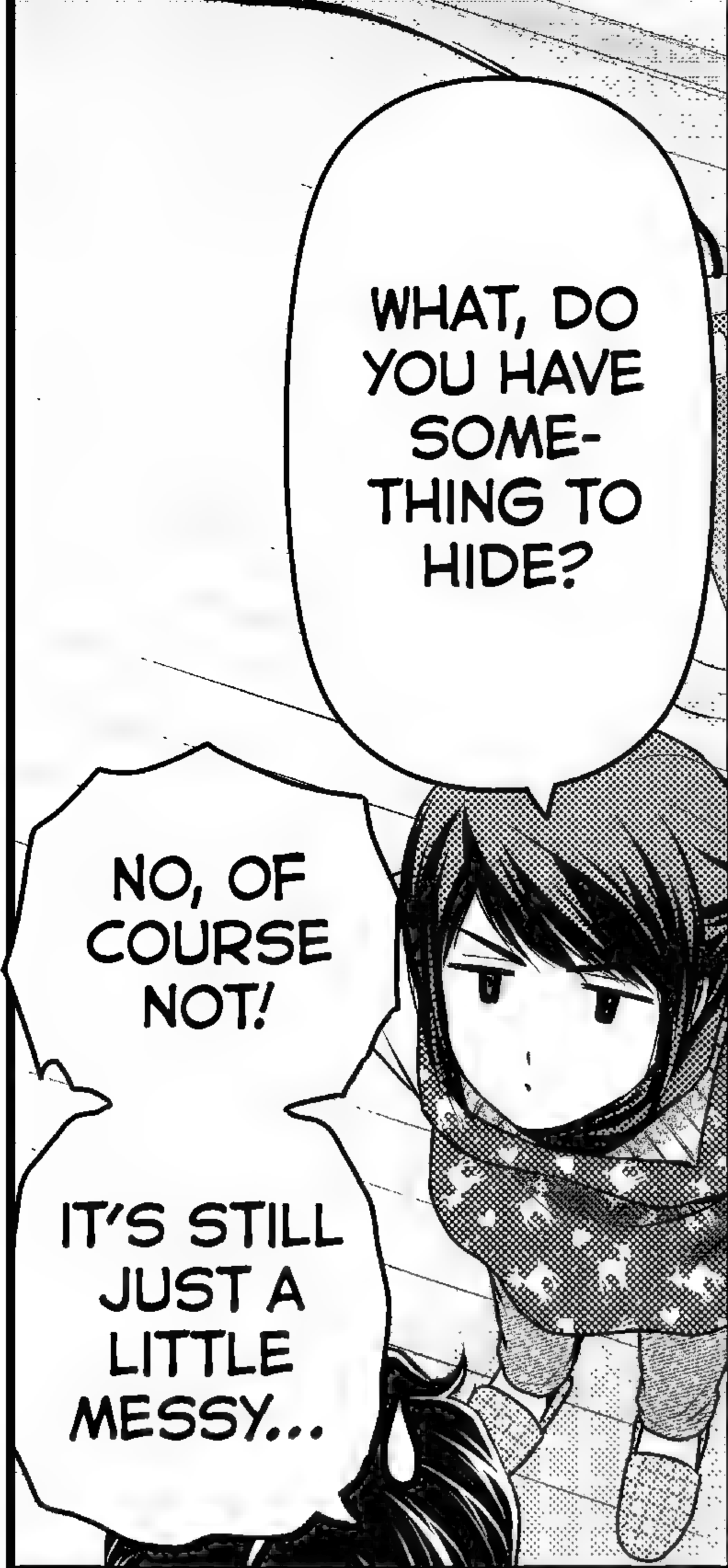
WHOA!
IT'S JUST
LIKE D*TH
NOTE!

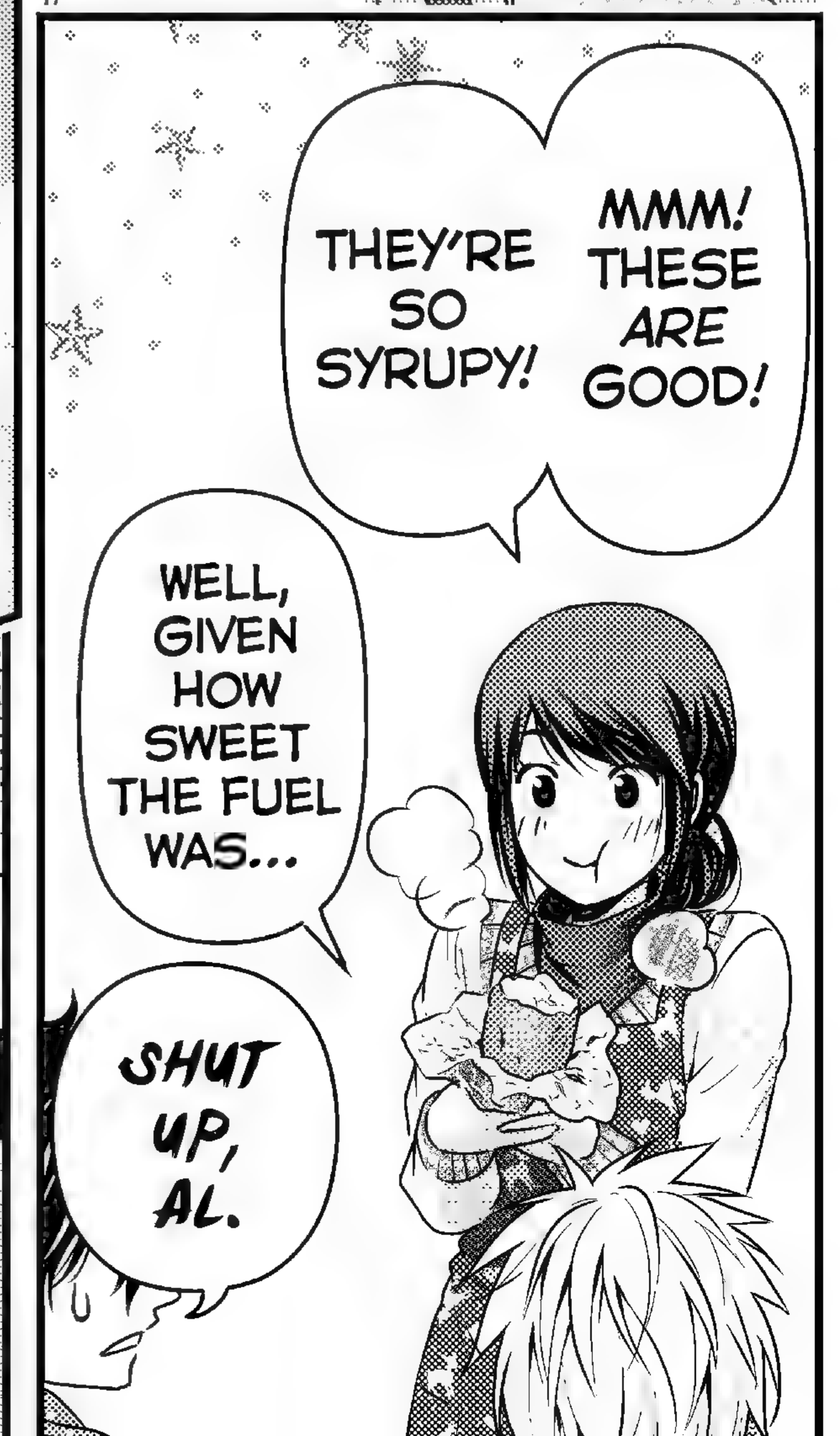
IT'S ALL
ABOUT
USING
YOUR
HEAD.

BEING A
CLOSET
PERVERT
IS A SKILL
UNTO
ITSELF...









NOTHING
SAYS
WINTER LIKE
ROASTED
SWEET
POTATOES,
RIGHT?

I WAS
WONDERING
WHAT THOSE
PAPER BAGS
WERE FOR...

ARE
YOU GUYS
ROASTING
SWEET
POTATOES?

THEY'RE
REALLY
GOOD!
WANT ONE,
RUI-CHAN?

THESE
ARE THE
POTATOES
FROM
THE FIRE.

AND
THERE
YOU
HAVE
IT...

A FEW
DAYS
LATER

THEY'RE
SO
SYRUPY!

MMM!
THESE
ARE
GOOD!

WELL,
GIVEN
HOW
SWEET
THE FUEL
WAS...

SHUT
UP,
AL.



MAKE
SURE YOU
LISTEN TO
EVERYONE,
ALL RIGHT?



STUDY
HARD.

I
WILL.



R

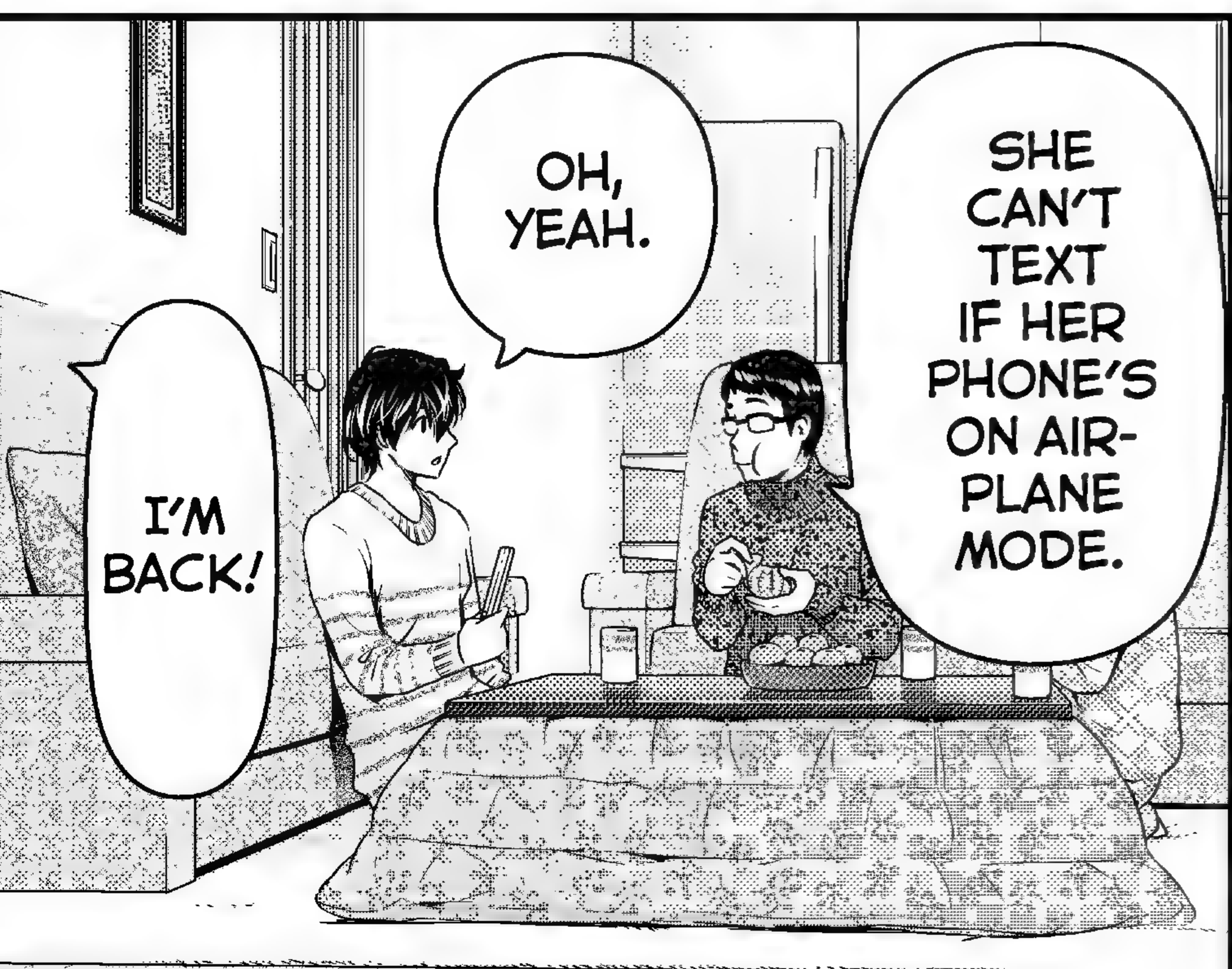
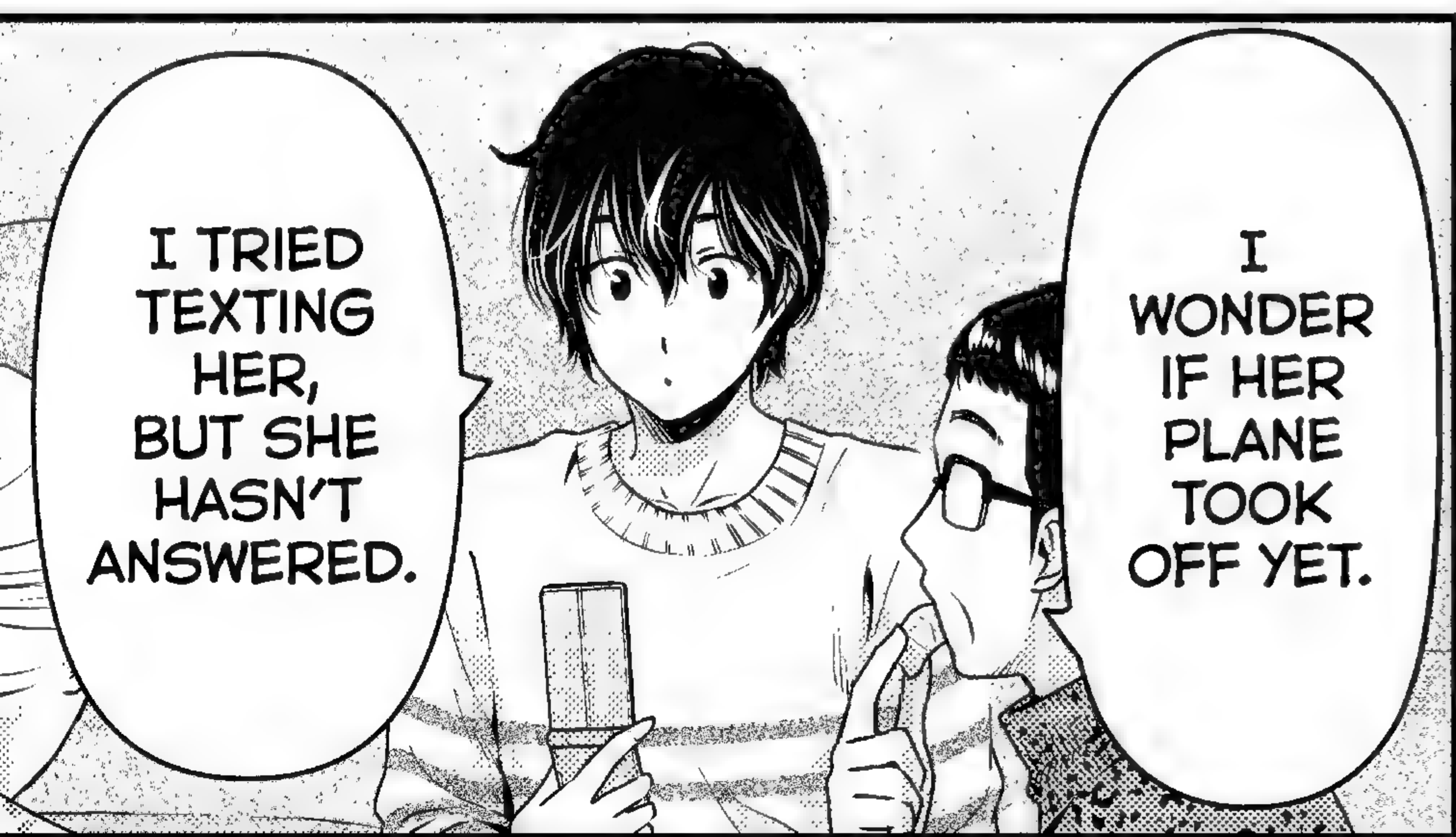
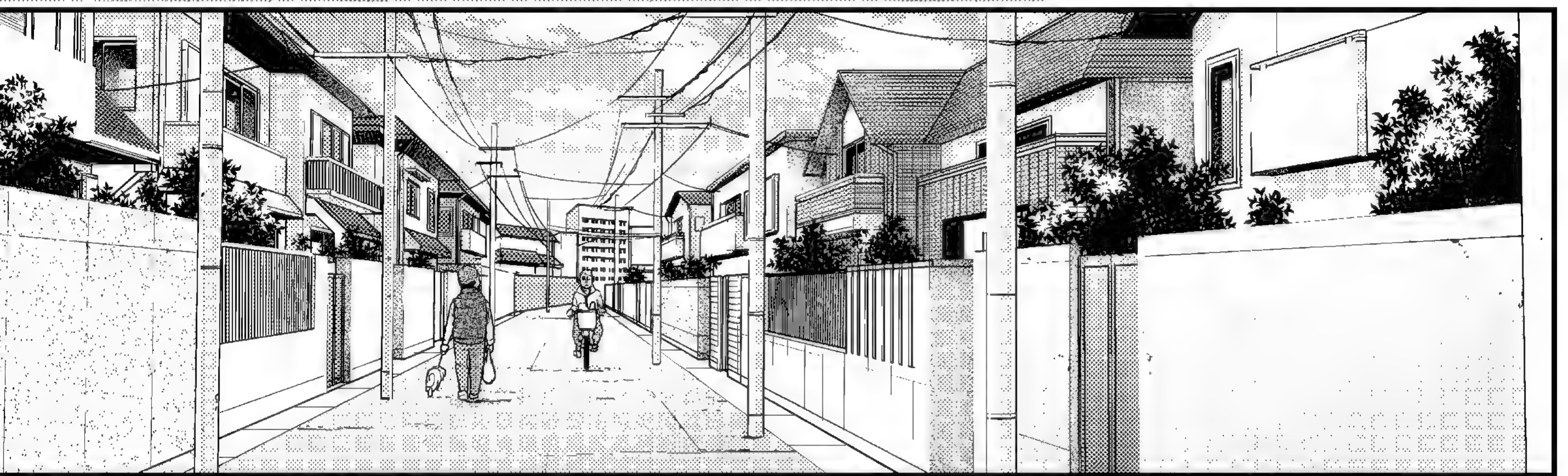
HA,
HA.

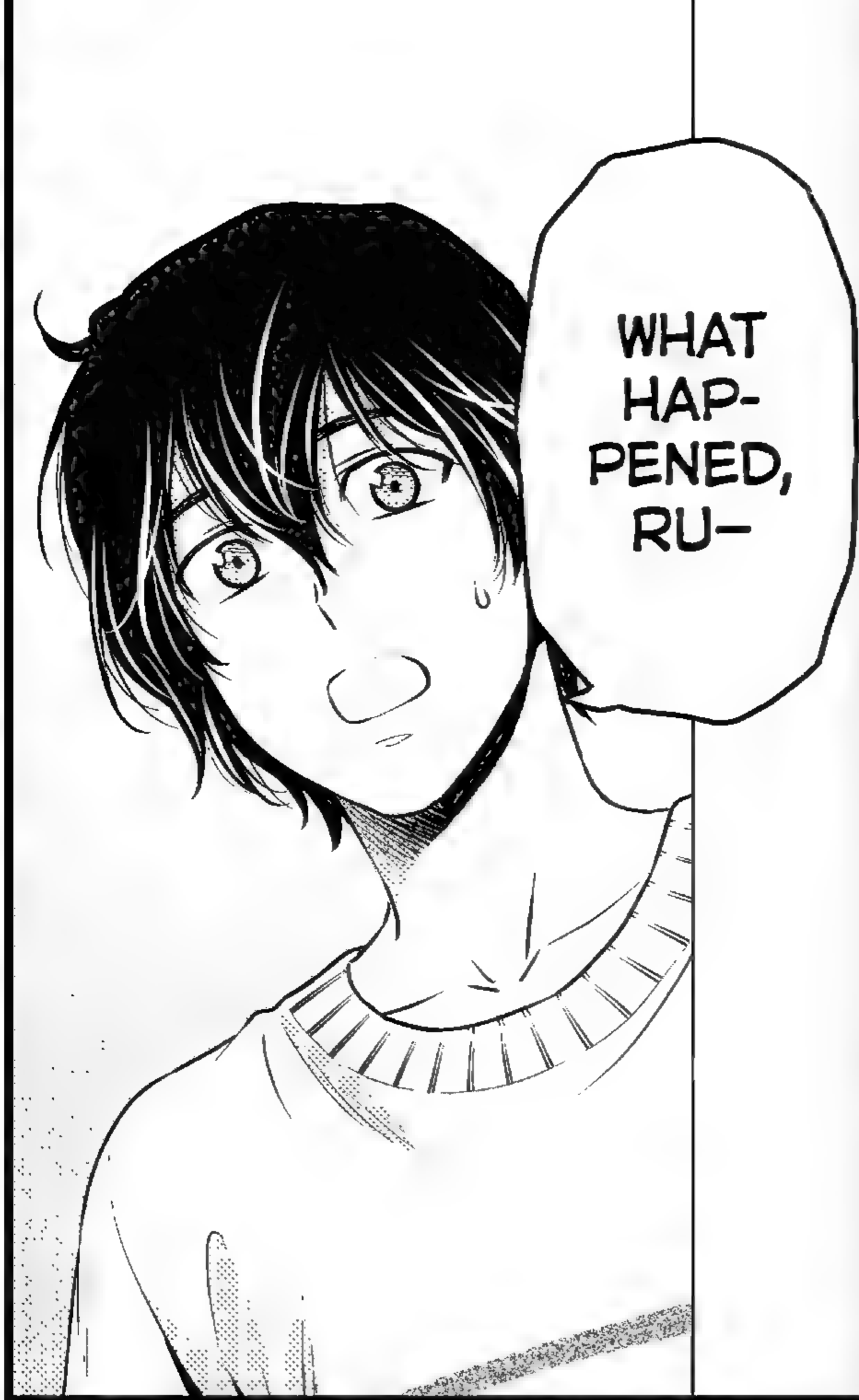
PARENTS
NEVER
STOP
WORRYING
ABOUT
THEIR
BABIES.

I KNOW.
I'M NOT
A LITTLE
KID, MOM.



HEY
...





WHAT
HAP-
PENED,
RU-



MAYBE
HER
FLIGHT
WAS CAN-
CELED.

SHE'S
BACK
ALREADY
?!

HUH
?!

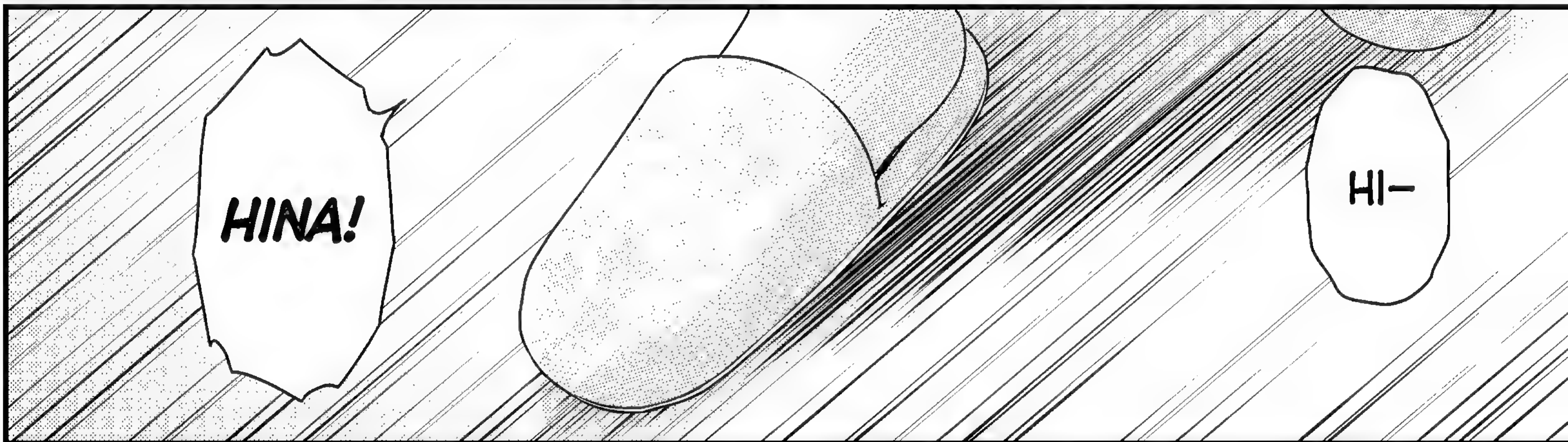


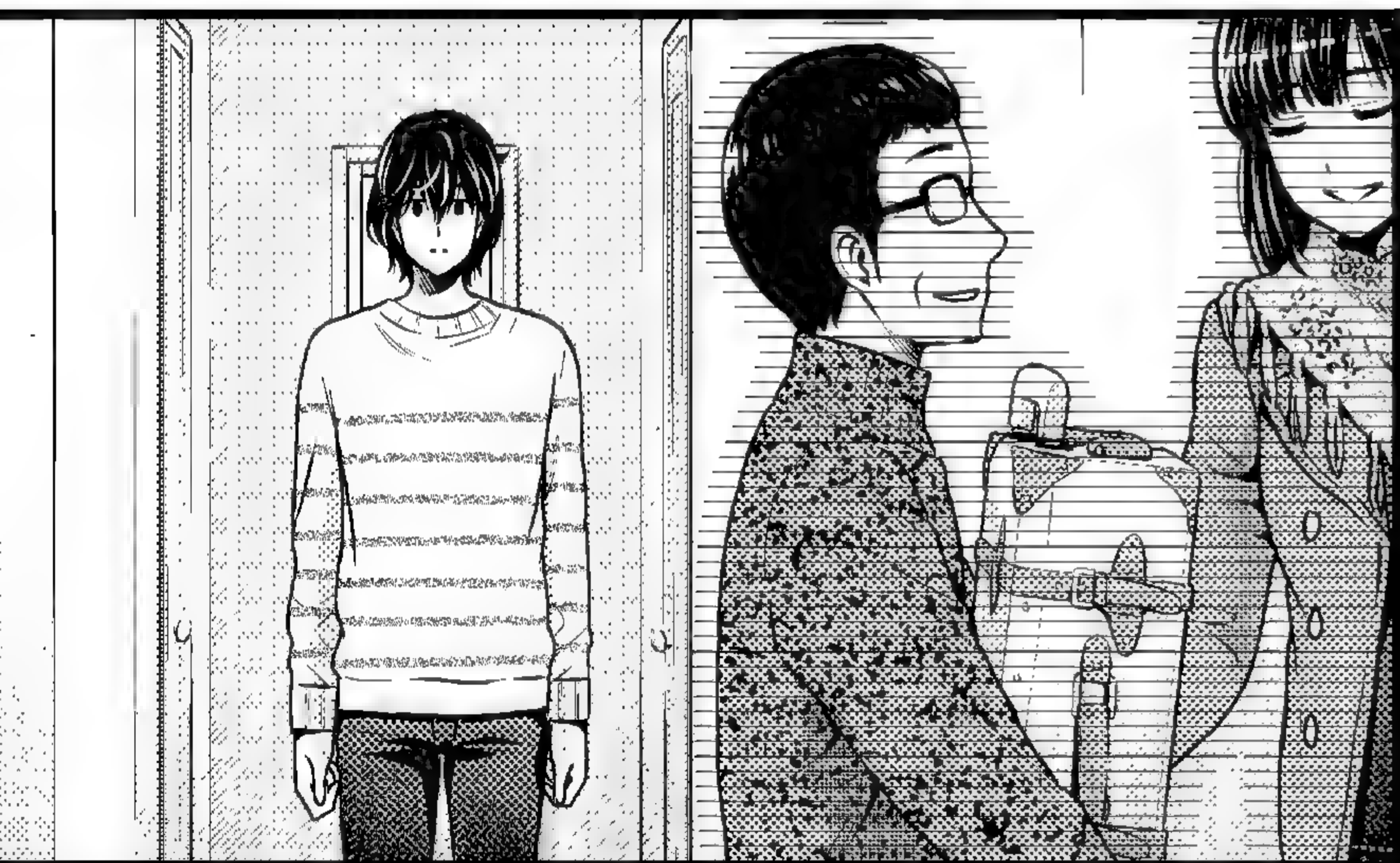
I'M
HOME
...

HEY
...

CHAPTER 129: NEW YEAR'S REUNION









...MOVED
ON, TOO,
RIGHT,
NATSUO-
KUN?

YOU'VE
...



SHE
DIDN'T
GIVE ME A
STRAIGHT
ANSWER,

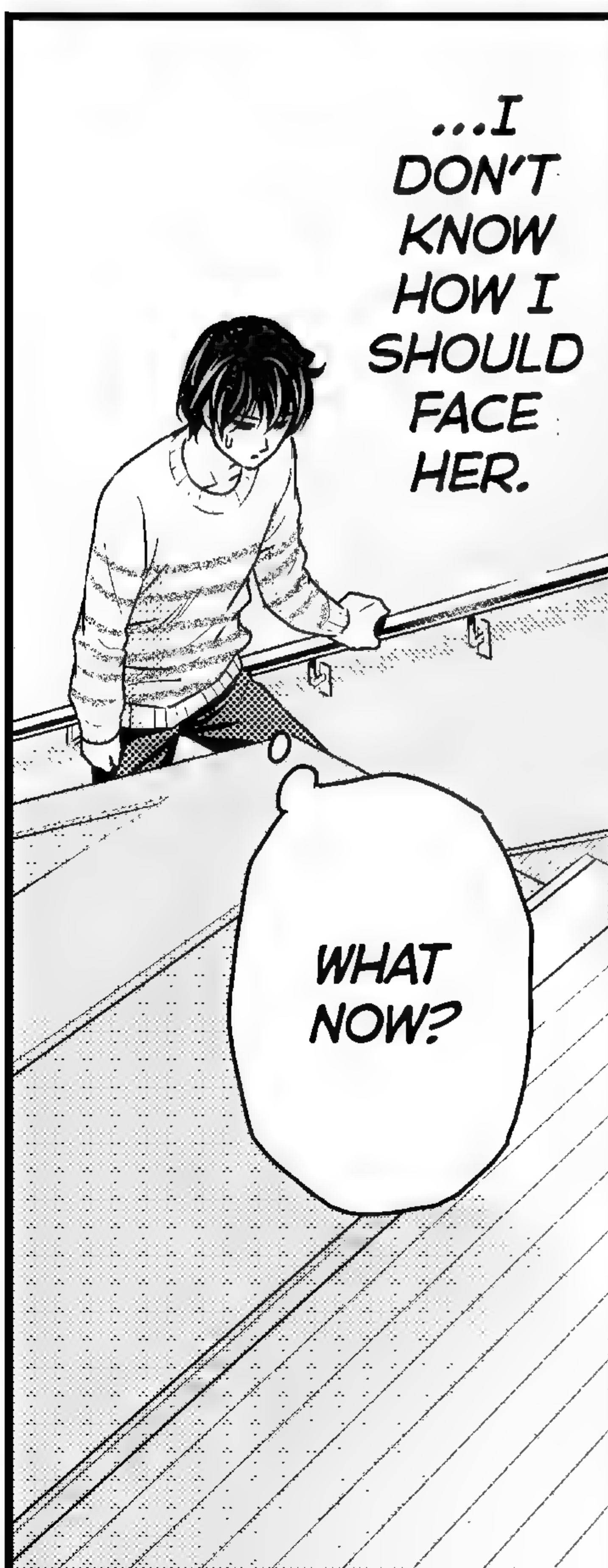
SO I
WASN'T
SURE IF
SHE'D
ACTUALLY
COME.



YEAH.

I'M
FINE
...

AH...



...I
DON'T
KNOW
HOW I
SHOULD
FACE
HER.

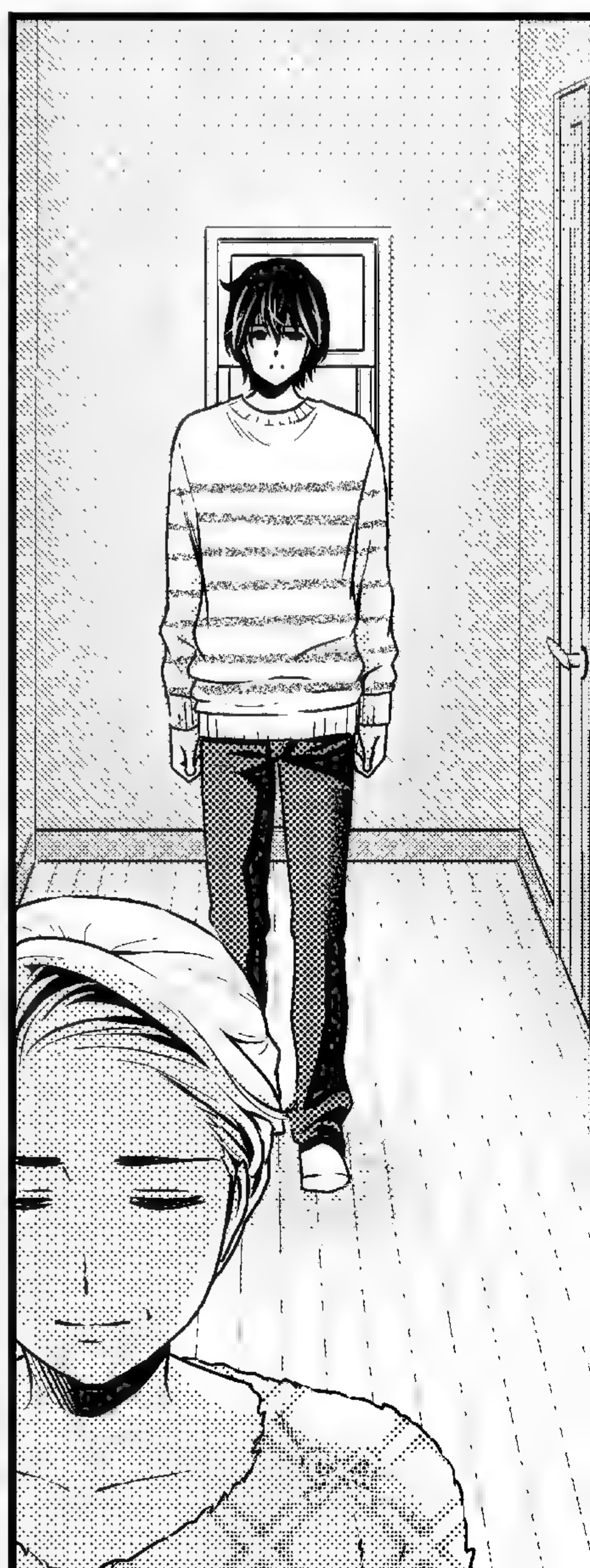
WHAT
NOW?



IT'S ALL
IN THE
PAST.

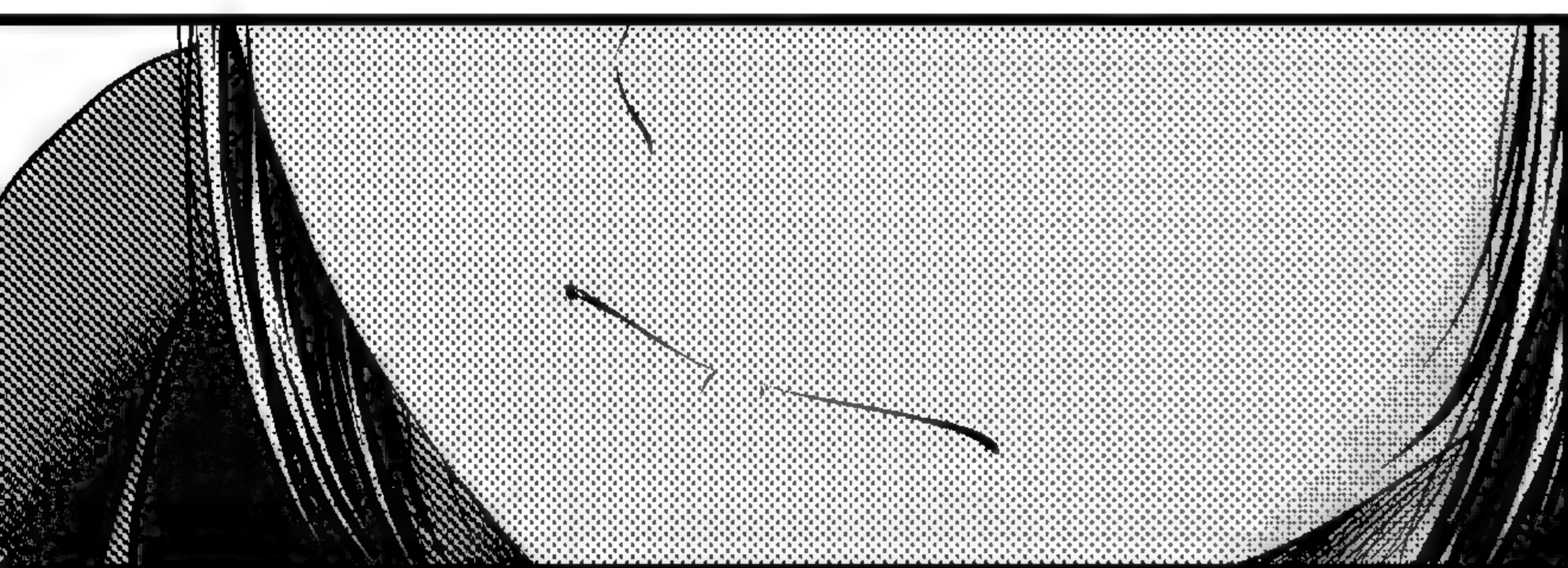
I DON'T
HAVE ANY
FEELINGS
FOR HER
ANYMORE.

BUT OUR
"PAST"
IS JUST SO
COMPLICATED
THAT...

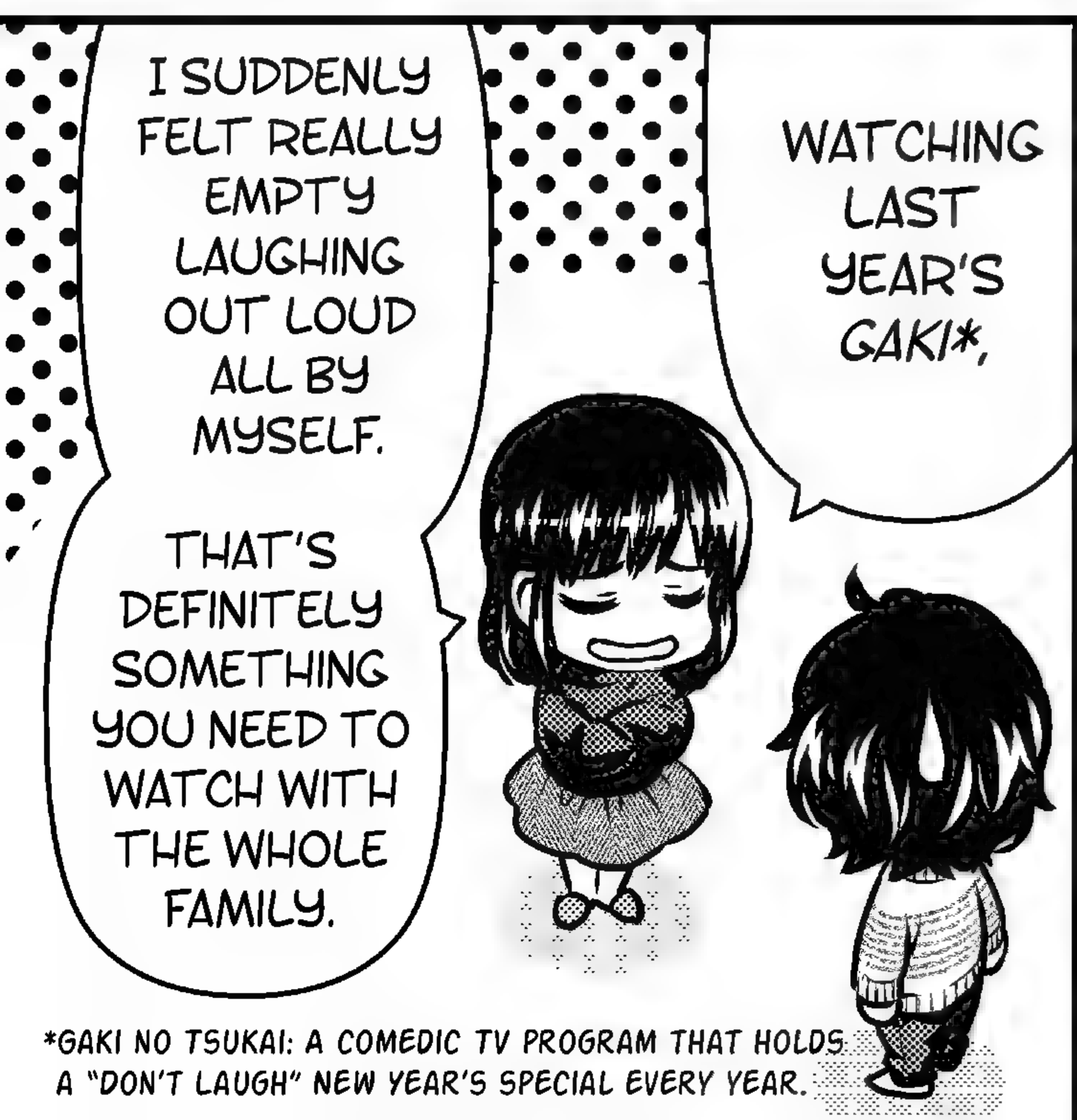




OH
...



I WENT
BACK AND
FORTH, BUT
SPENDING
NEW YEAR'S
BY MYSELF
AGAIN
SOUNDED
REALLY
LONELY.



I SUDDENLY
FELT REALLY
EMPTY
LAUGHING
OUT LOUD
ALL BY
MYSELF.

WATCHING
LAST
YEAR'S
GAKI*,

THAT'S
DEFINITELY
SOMETHING
YOU NEED TO
WATCH WITH
THE WHOLE
FAMILY.



SORRY!

I BET I
THREW YOU
FOR A LOOP,
HUH?

*GAKI NO TSUKAI: A COMEDIC TV PROGRAM THAT HOLDS
A "DON'T LAUGH" NEW YEAR'S SPECIAL EVERY YEAR.



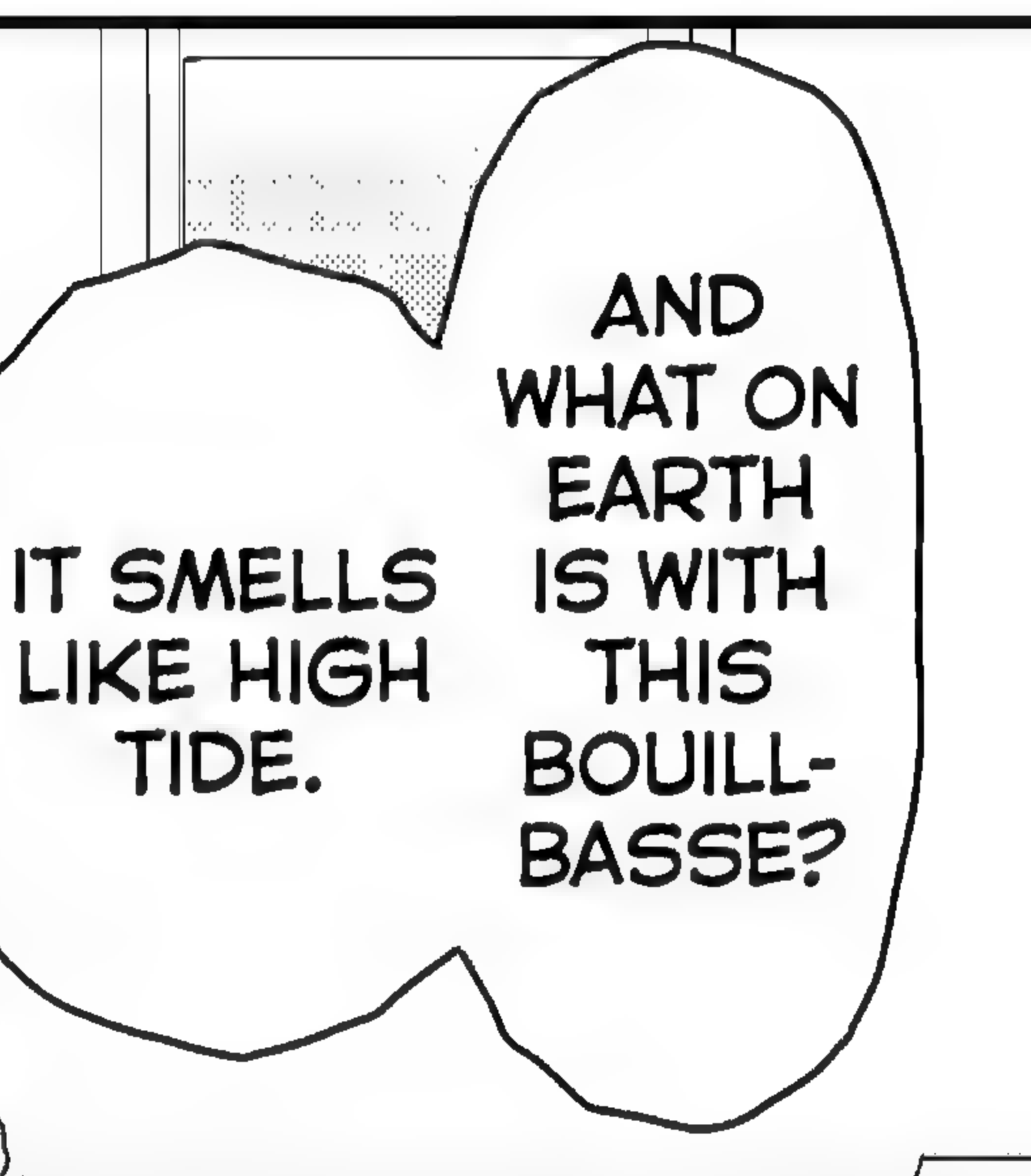


I'LL SHOW
YOU THE
SKILLS
I'VE HONED
WHILE
LIVING ON
MY OWN,



TO-
NIGHT,







AND THIS
TUNA
WITH
GRATED
YAM!

THE
GRILLED
SQUID
LEGS AND
ONIONS
ARE TASTY,
TOO!

YEAH!

HUH...
TOO BAD
ABOUT THE
PAELLA,

BUT THIS
WASABI
OCTOPUS
IS PRETTY
GOOD.

ALL
YOU MADE
WITHOUT
ANY
HICCUPS
WAS PUB
FOOD.



**NAMI-
SENSEI
WITH THE
ASSIST
OF THE
CENTURY!**

IT WENT
FINE WHEN
I MADE IT
WITH MY
CO-WORKER,
NAMI-
SENSEI...

THAT'S
WEIRD...



ANYWAY,
DON'T
WORRY
ABOUT
COOKING
WHILE
YOU'RE
HERE ANY-
MORE.

NATSUO
HAS
ENTRANCE
EXAMS
COMING UP,
AFTER ALL.

OF
COURSE
I DO!

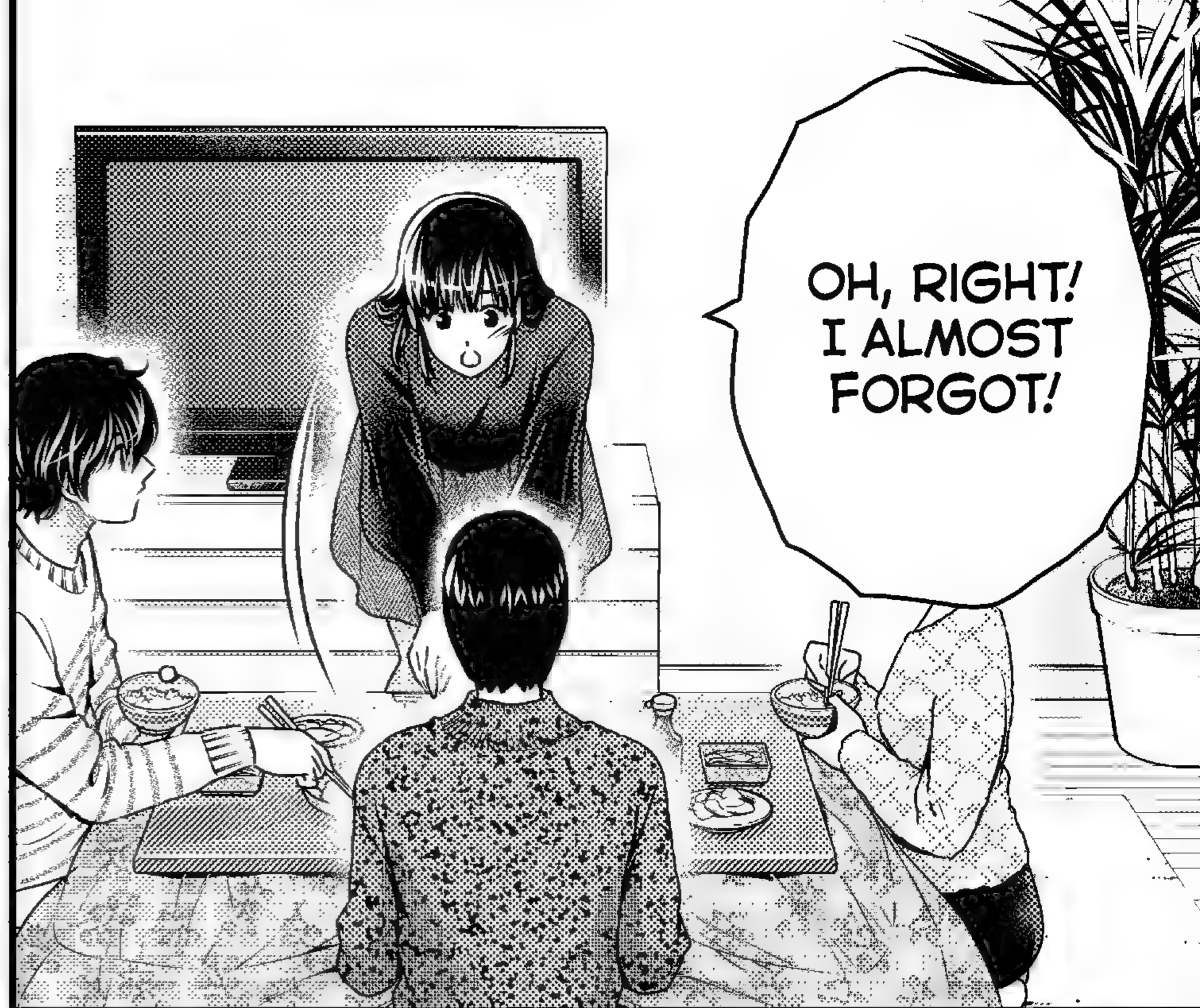
PLEASE DON'T
GET LIVER
DISEASE IN
YOUR 20S...

I'M JUST
NOT USED
TO THIS
KITCHEN!

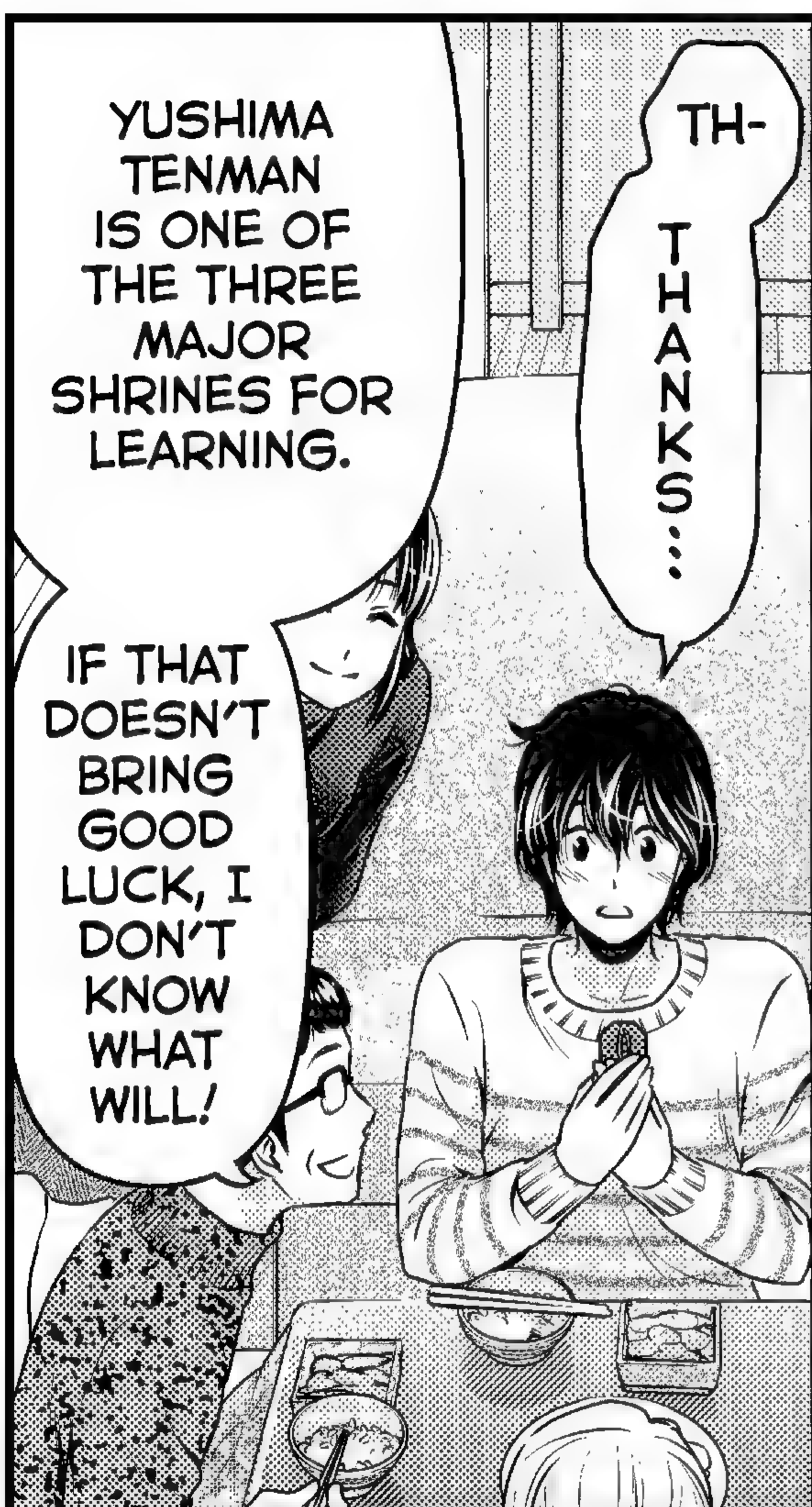
I'M
STARTING
TO WONDER
IF YOU LIVE
ON ANY-
THING BUT
BOOZE...



I STOPPED
BY YUSHIMA
TENMAN
SHRINE
ON MY WAY
HERE.



OH, RIGHT!
I ALMOST
FORGOT!



YUSHIMA
TENMAN
IS ONE OF
THE THREE
MAJOR
SHRINES FOR
LEARNING.

TH-

THANKS...

IF THAT
DOESN'T
BRING
GOOD
LUCK, I
DON'T
KNOW
WHAT
WILL!



HERE.

IT'S A
GOOD-
LUCK
CHARM.

CHARM: ACADEMICS



AH HA HA HA
あはははっ

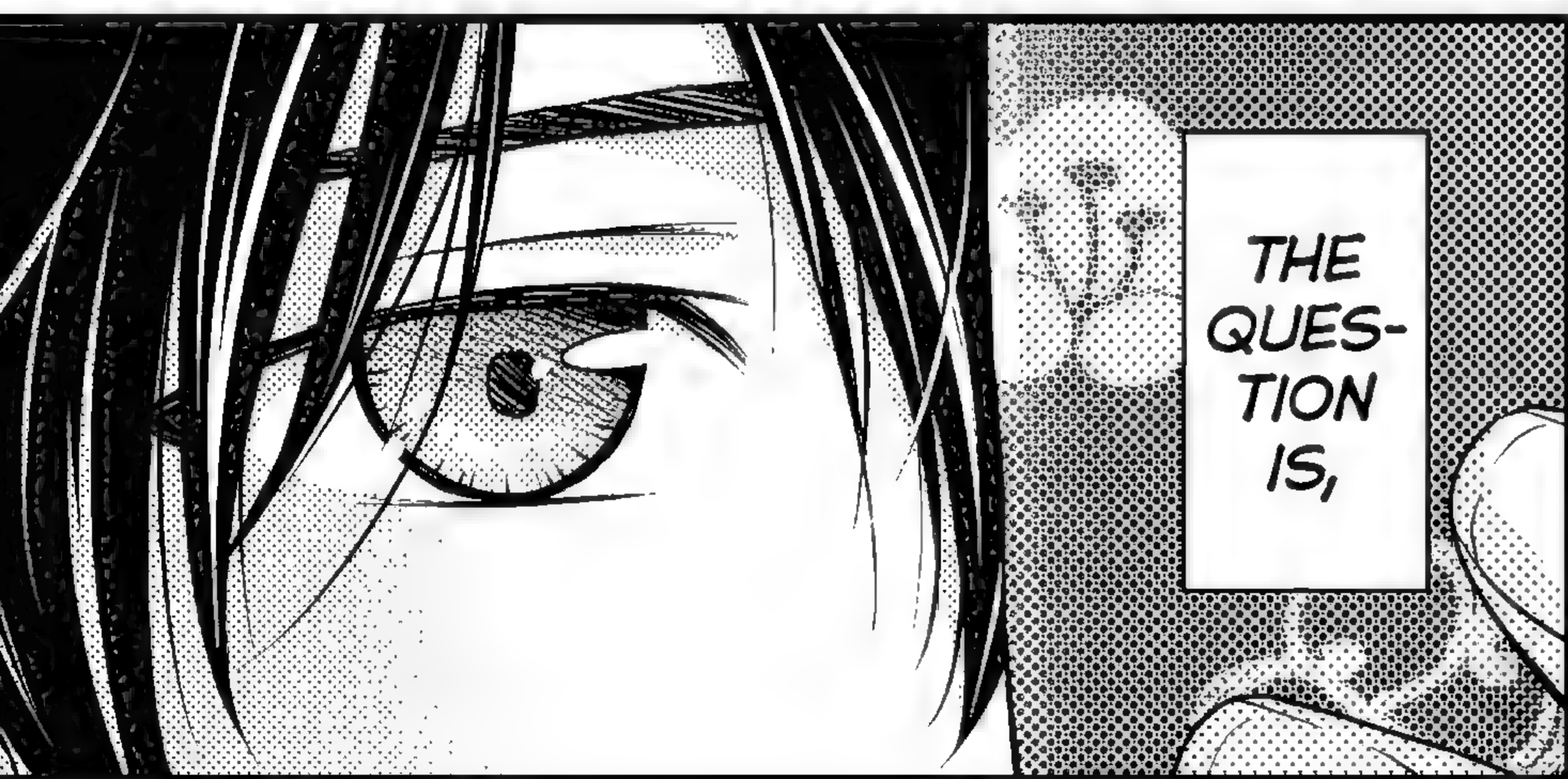
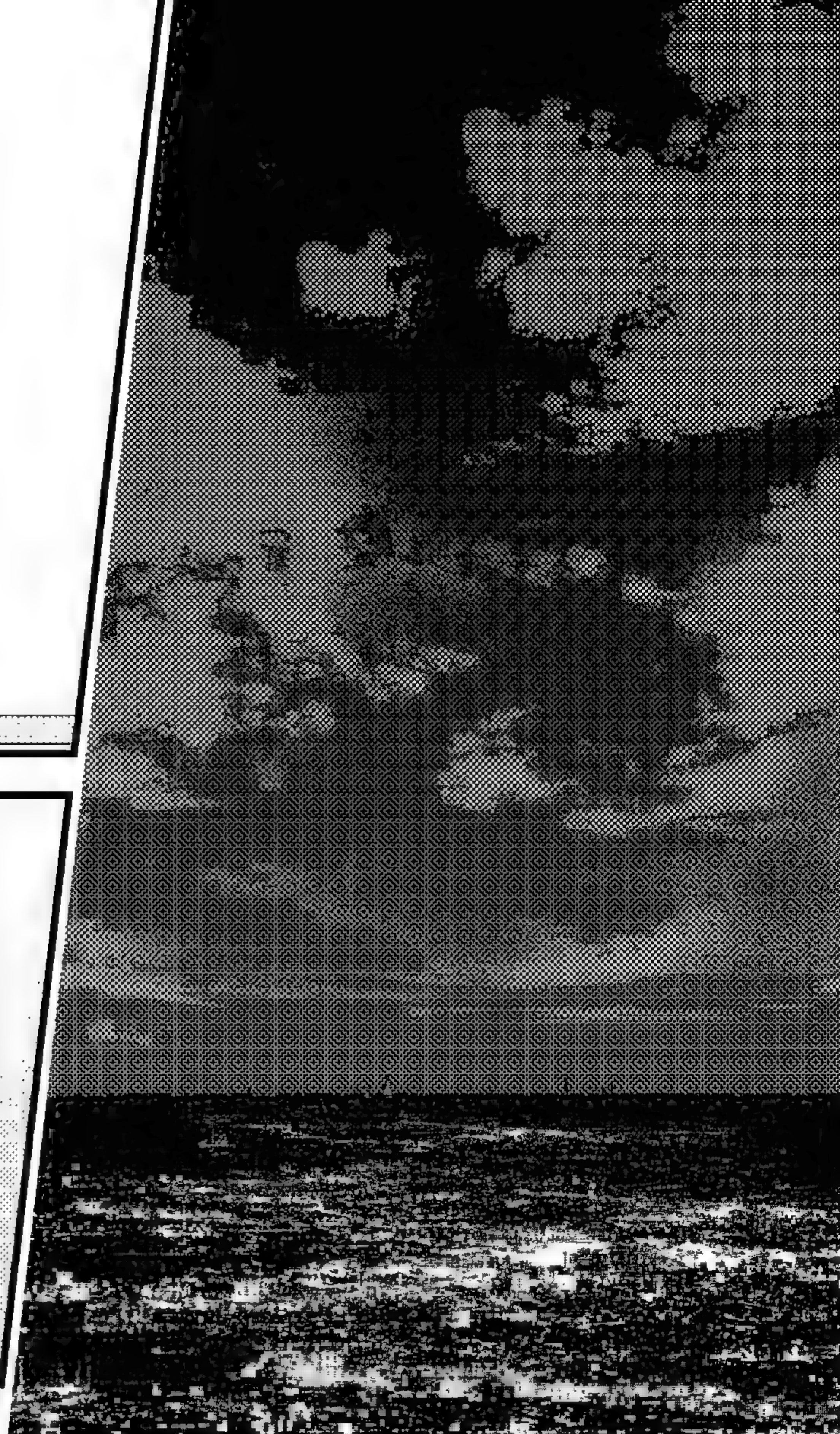
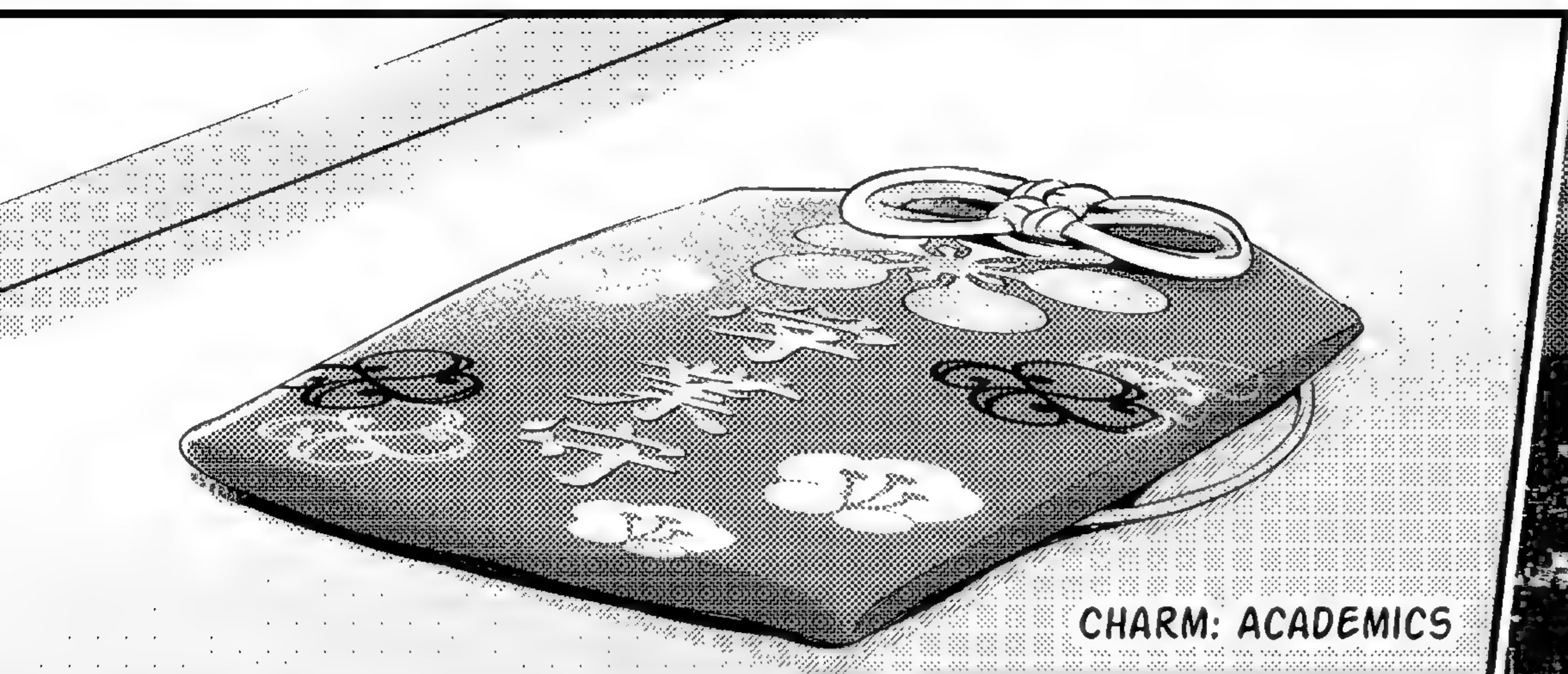
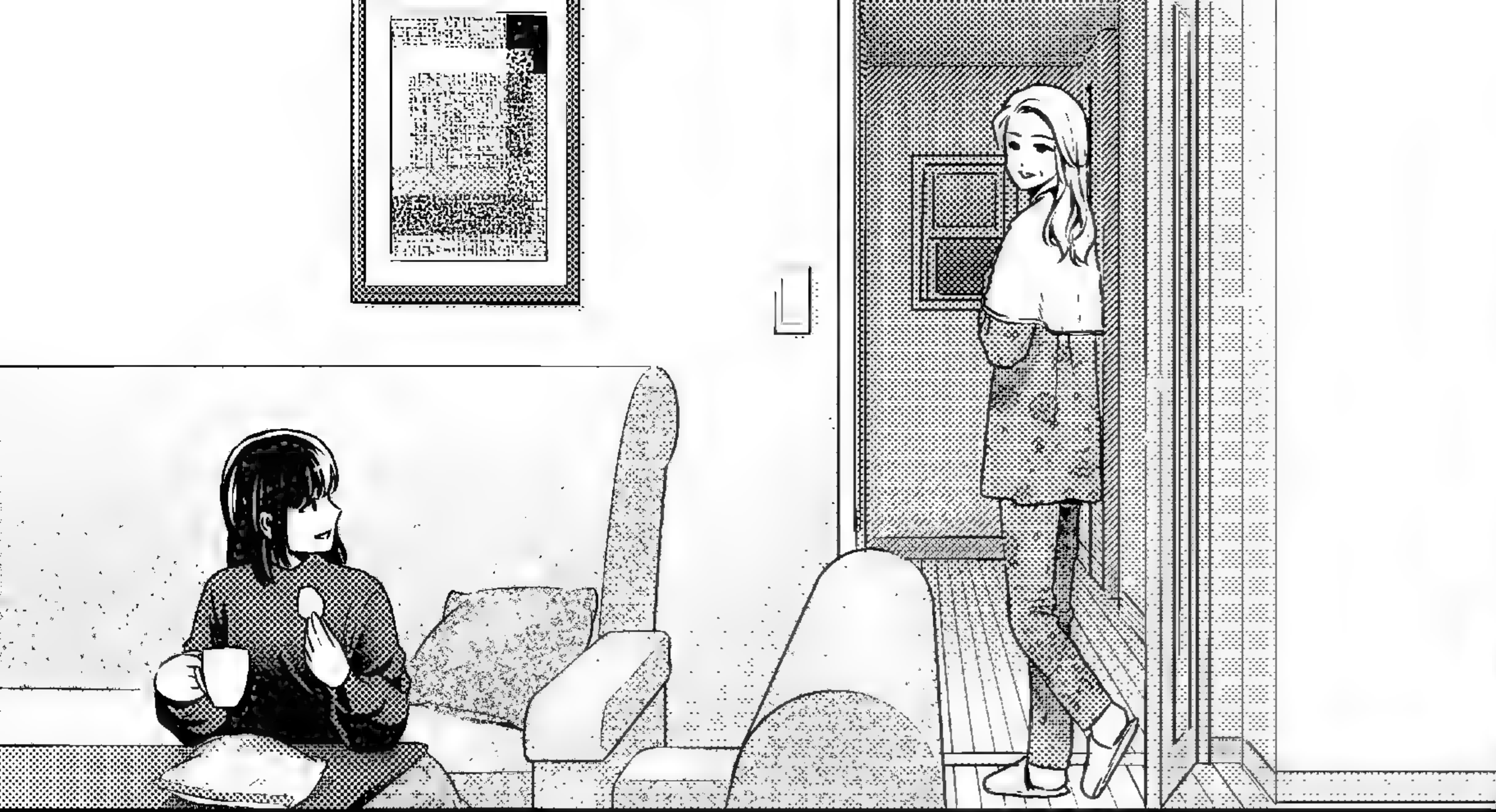
RUDE!!



THAT
WAS
CLOSE.

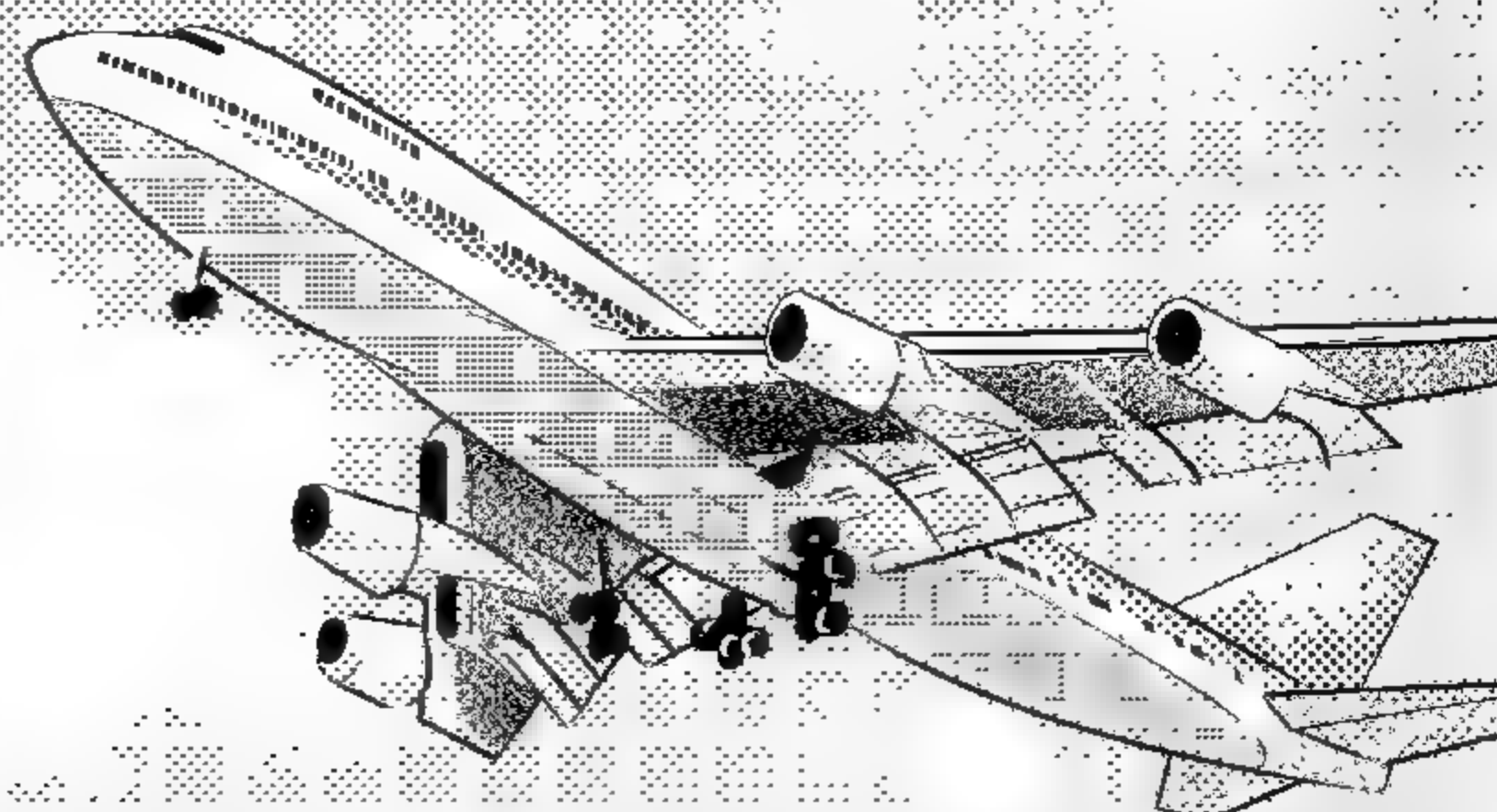
WITHOUT
THAT, YOU'D
JUST BE A
KITCHEN-
WRECKER.

I THOUGHT
I SHOULD
DO SOME-
THING BIG
SISTER-LIKE,
Y'KNOW?



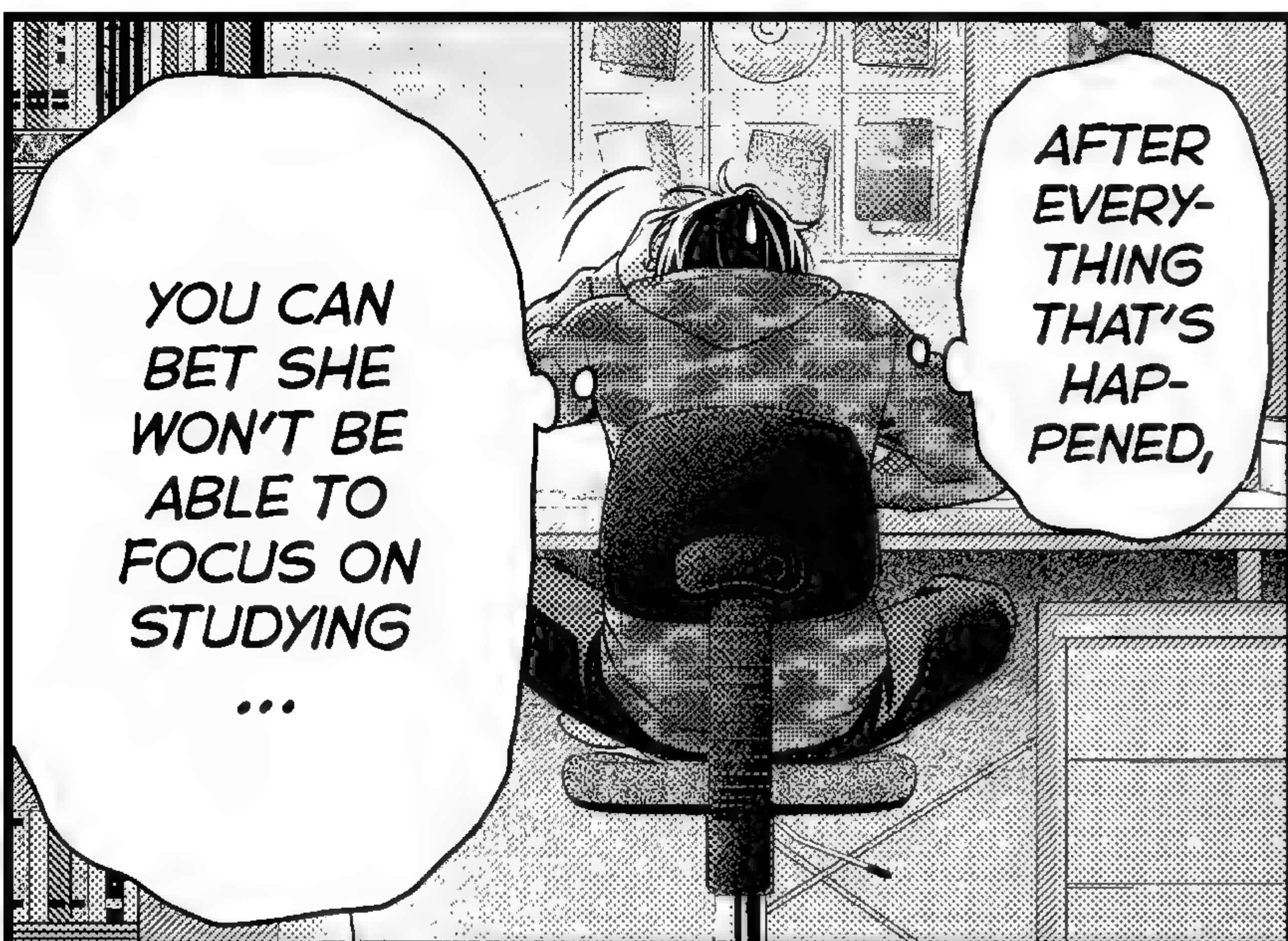


IF I TELL
HER NOW,
WHAT IF...



I KNOW
IT'D BE
BEST TO
JUST BE
UP-FRONT
WITH HER.

I DO.



YOU CAN
BET SHE
WON'T BE
ABLE TO
FOCUS ON
STUDYING
...

AFTER
EVERY-
THING
THAT'S
HAP-
PENED,

BUT SHE'S
REALLY BEEN
LOOKING
FORWARD TO
STUDYING
COOKING
OVERSEAS.



HINA'S
HOME.

THEN
AGAIN, IF
SHE FINDS
OUT FROM
SOMEONE
OTHER
THAN ME
...



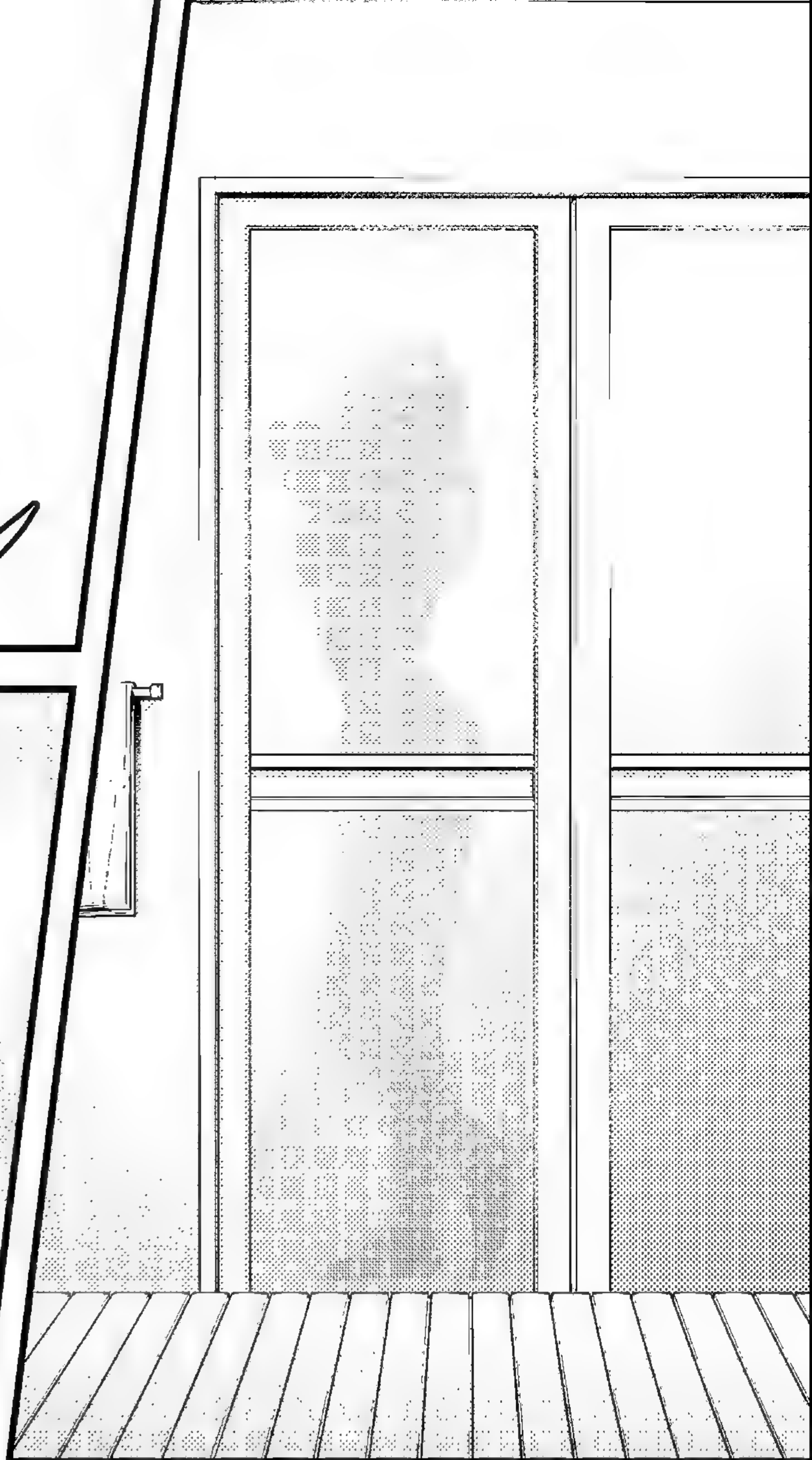
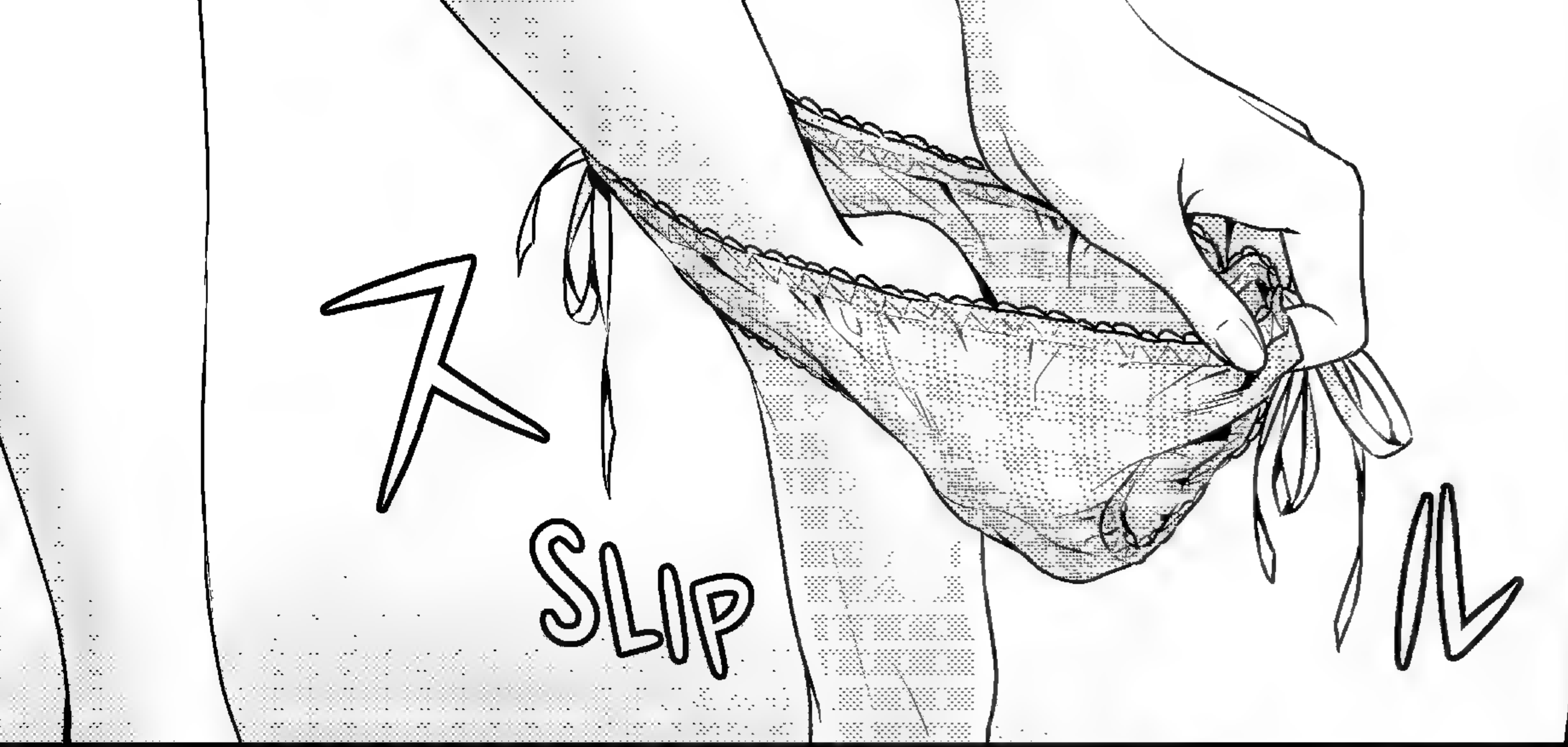
WHAT'S
THE RIGHT
THING
TO DO?!



YOU
TOLD
ME TO
TRUST
YOU!

WHY
DIDN'T
YOU
TELL
ME?!

...





THIS
IS THE
LIFE!
♥

AHHHH!

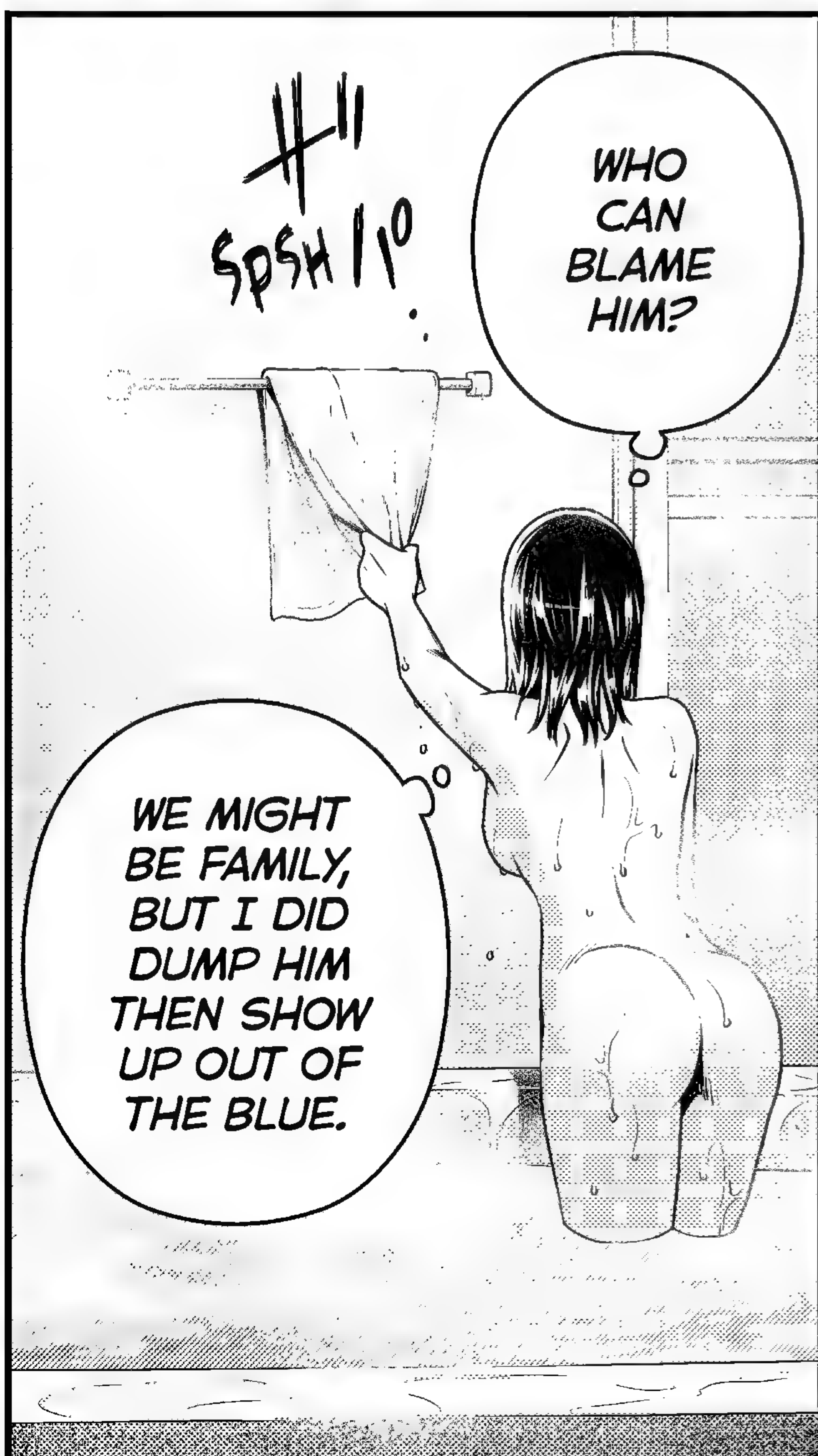


NOTHING
SAYS
WINTER
LIKE A
GOOD
SOAK!

I'VE BEEN
SO BUSY
LATELY
THAT I'VE
ONLY HAD
TIME FOR
SHOWERS.

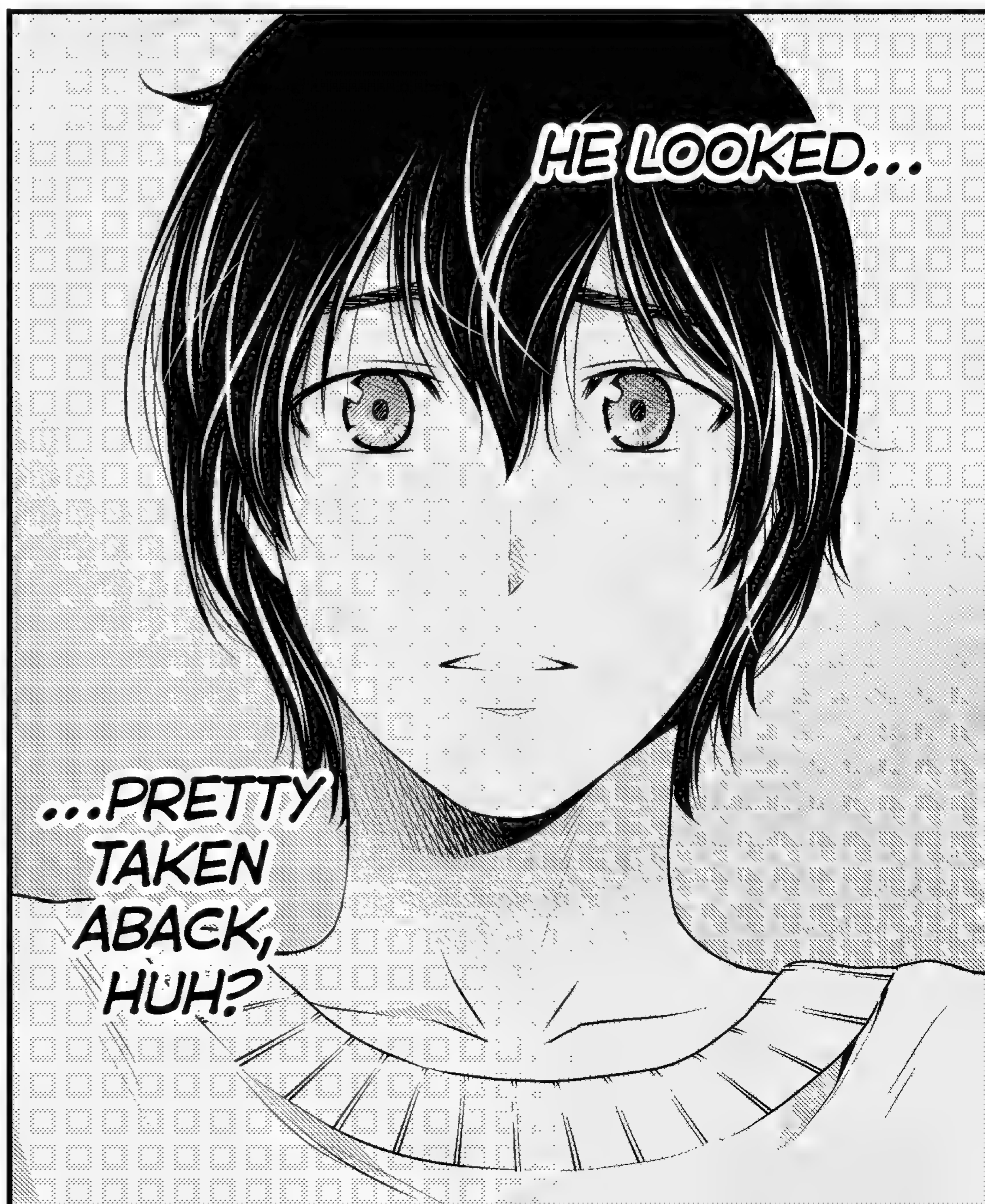
I
MISSED
TAKING
BATHS!

IT'S
SO
WARM
...



WHO
CAN
BLAME
HIM?

WE MIGHT
BE FAMILY,
BUT I DID
DUMP HIM
THEN SHOW
UP OUT OF
THE BLUE.



HE LOOKED...

...PRETTY
TAKEN
ABACK,
HUH?



NO!

OF
COURSE
NOT!

DID YOU
THINK HE'D
BE HAPPY
TO SEE
YOU?



BOF
は
ん
な



HINA!

WEL-
COME
BACK,



I'D
HAVE
TO
BE
...

PRETTY
SHAME-
LESS TO
THINK
THAT.



7//
=//B
=//S
H//S
H//H



IT CAN'T BE
HELPED.

ALTHOUGH
I HAD NO
OTHER
CHOICE,

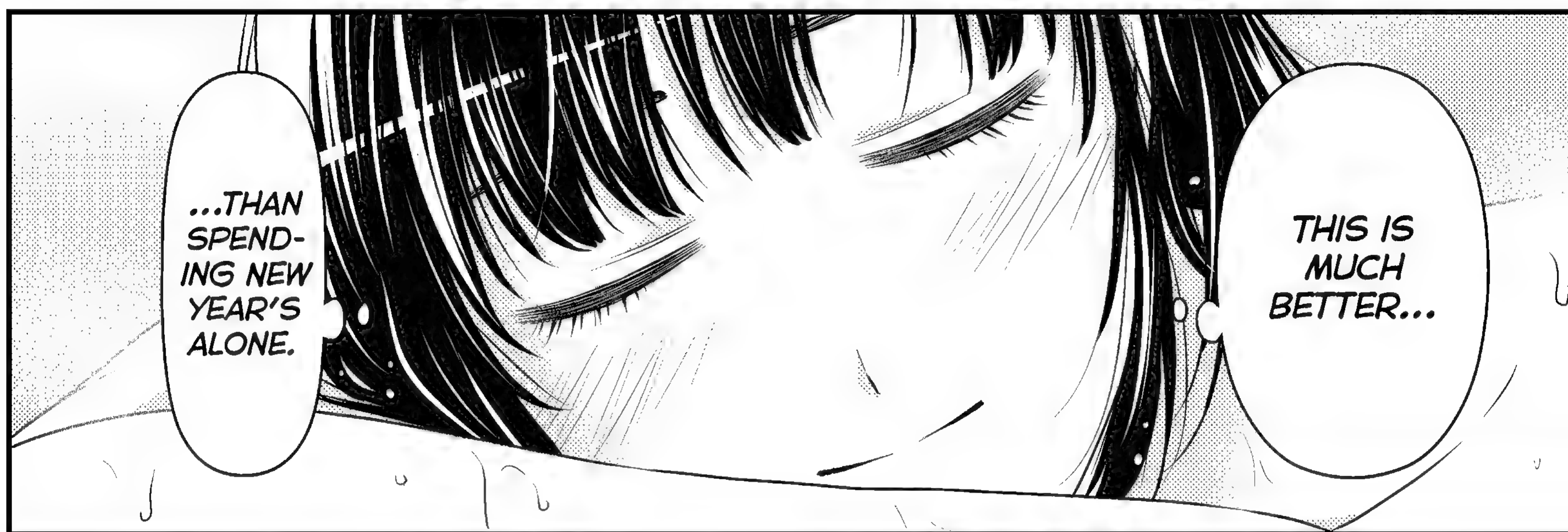
I TOOK HIS
SINCERE
FEELINGS
AND THREW
THEM ON THE
FLOOR AGAIN
AND AGAIN.



I'M JUST
GLAD I GOT
TO SEE HIS
FACE AGAIN.

IT
DOESN'T
MATTER
WHAT HIS
REACTION
IS.

IT'S
FINE.



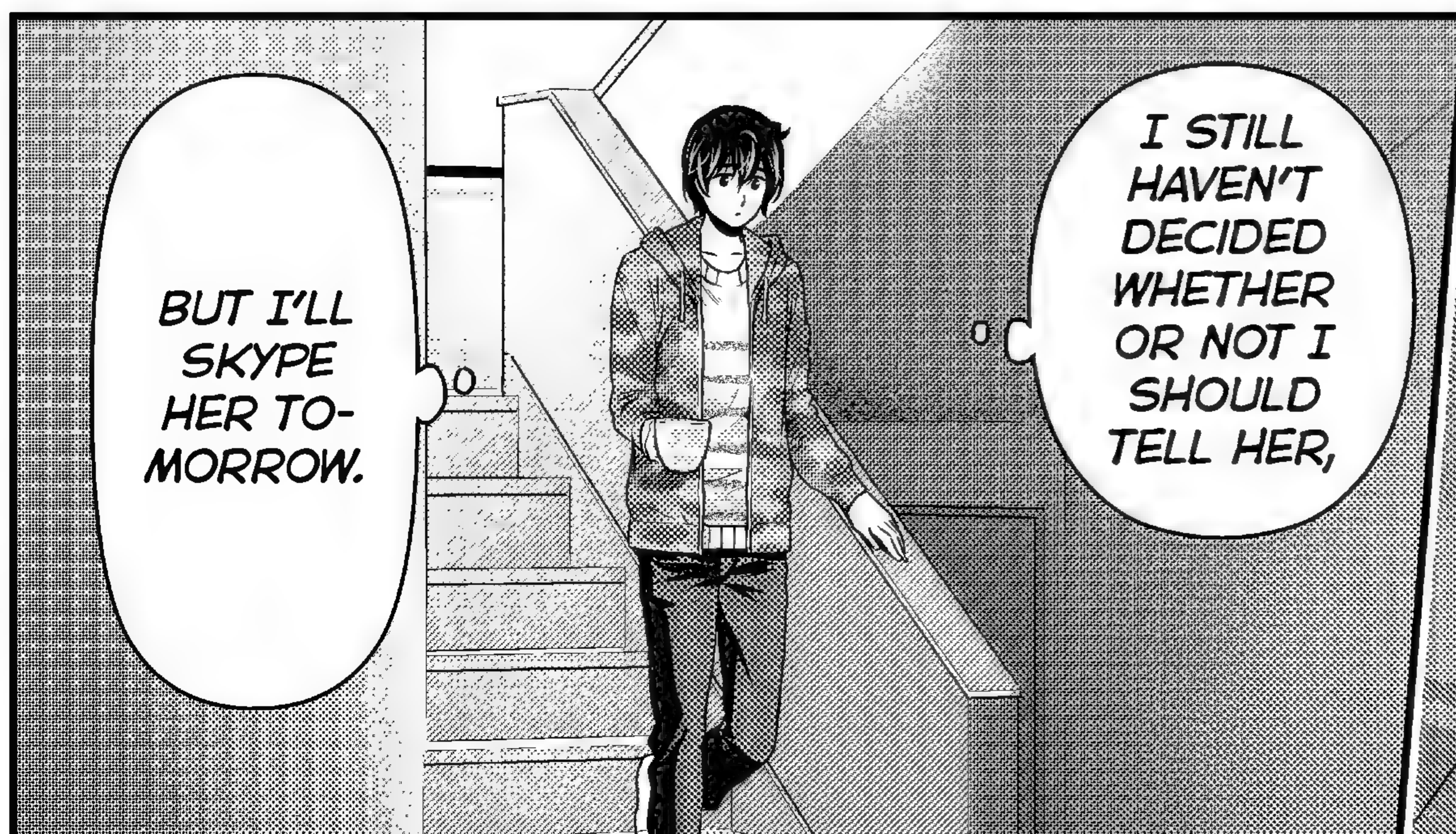
...THAN
SPEND-
ING NEW
YEAR'S
ALONE.

THIS IS
MUCH
BETTER...



RUI SAID
IT WAS A
13-HOUR
FLIGHT, SO
SHE SHOULD
JUST ABOUT
BE THERE
NOW.

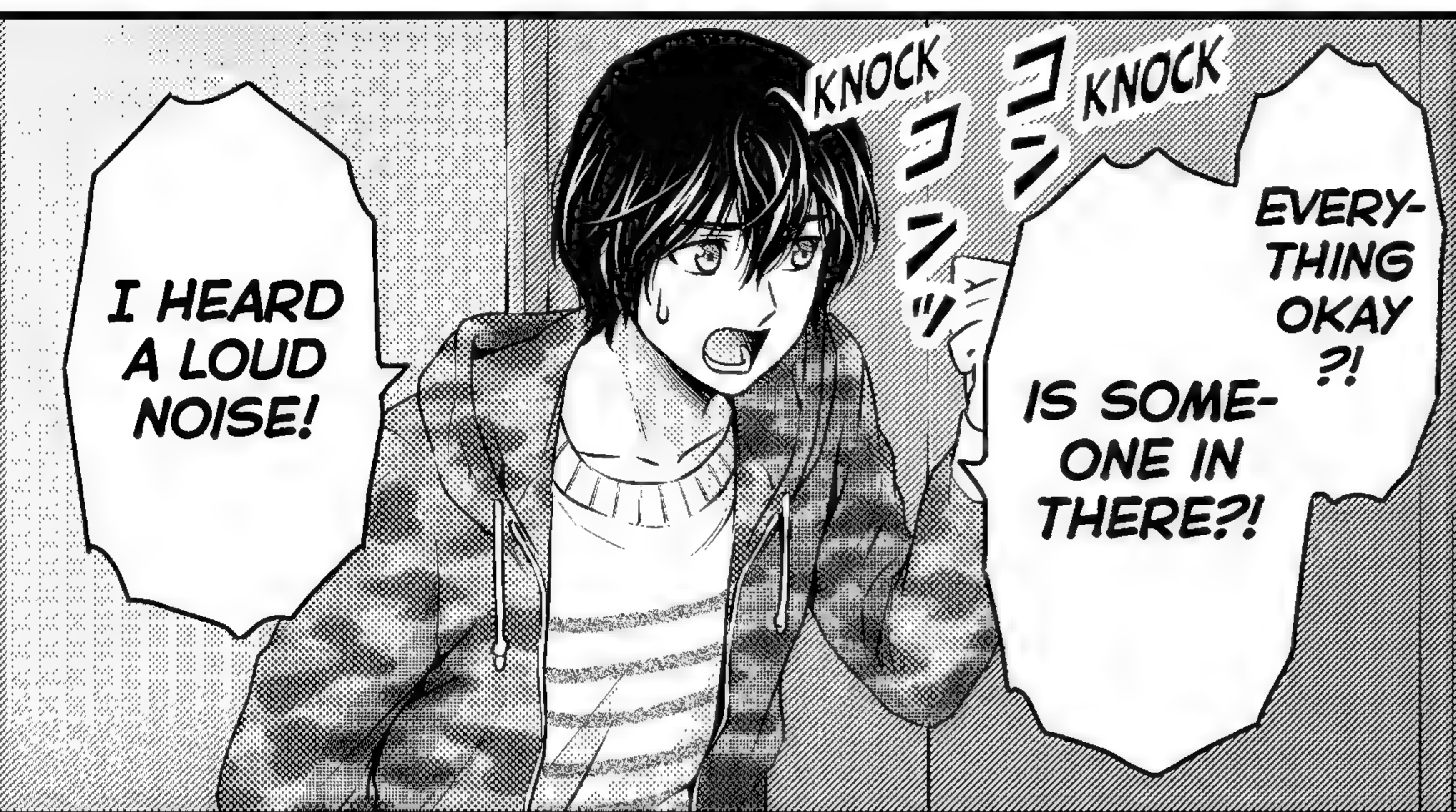
IT'S
PAST
ONE
...



BUT I'LL
SKYPE
HER TO-
MORROW.

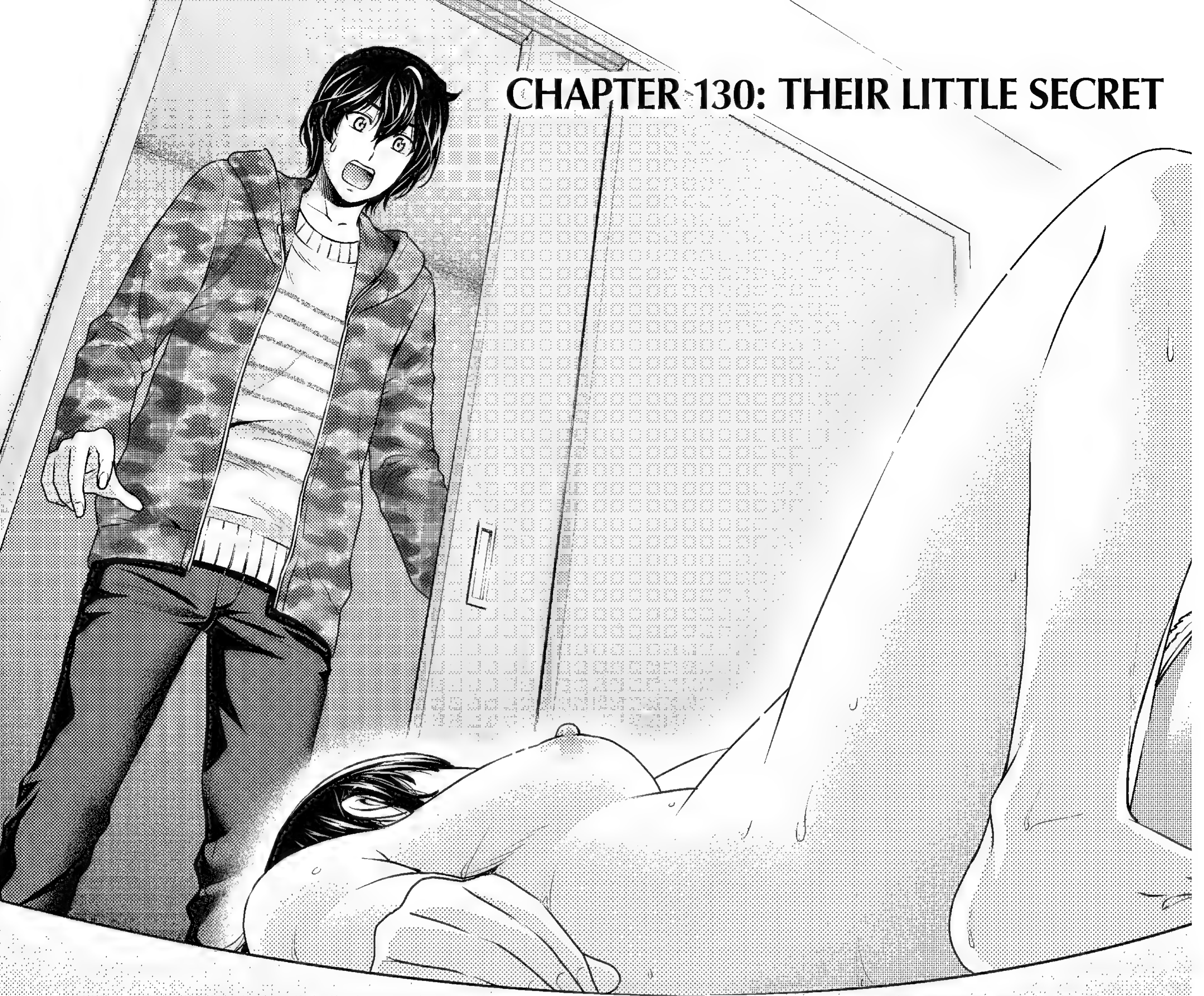
I STILL
HAVEN'T
DECIDED
WHETHER
OR NOT I
SHOULD
TELL HER,



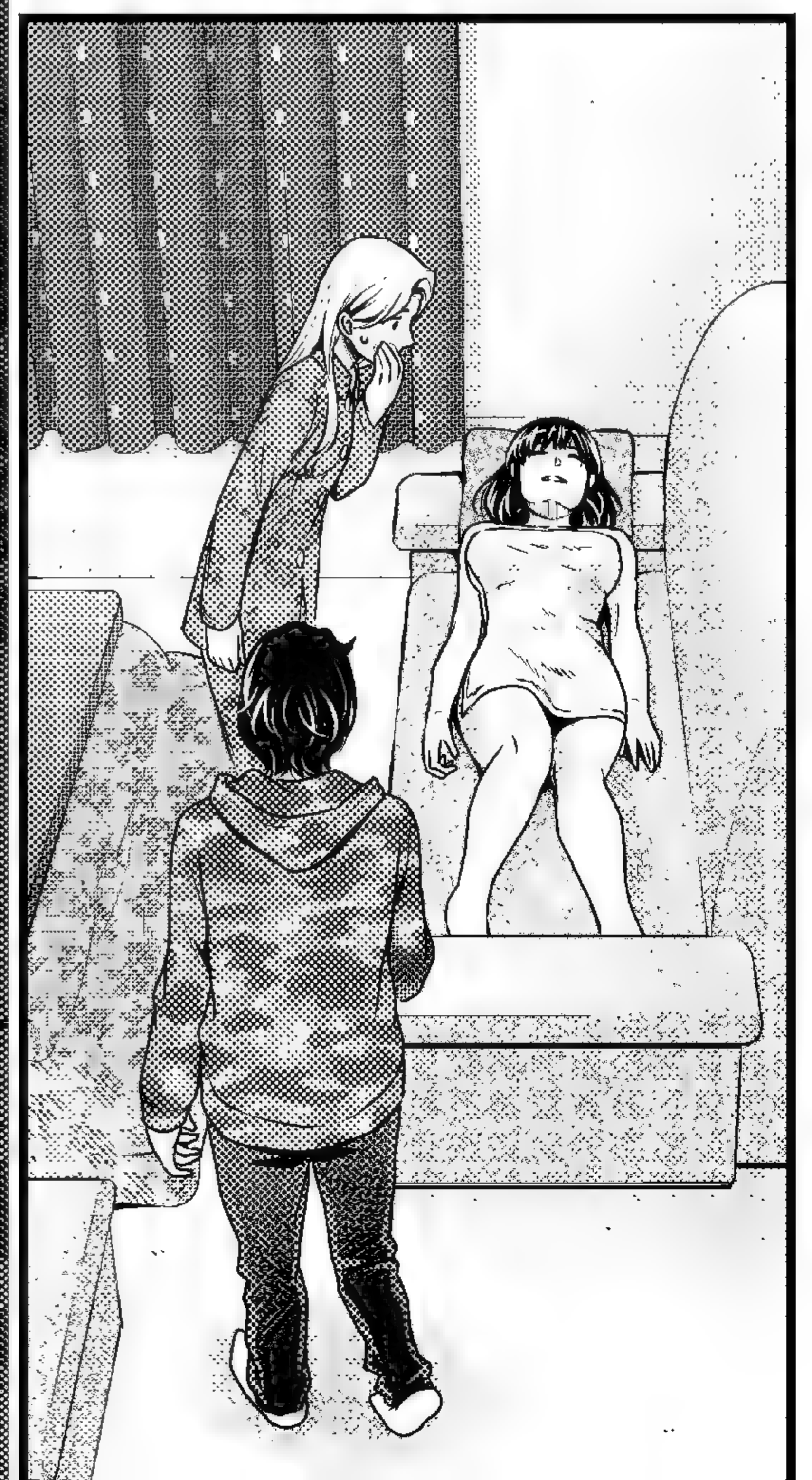
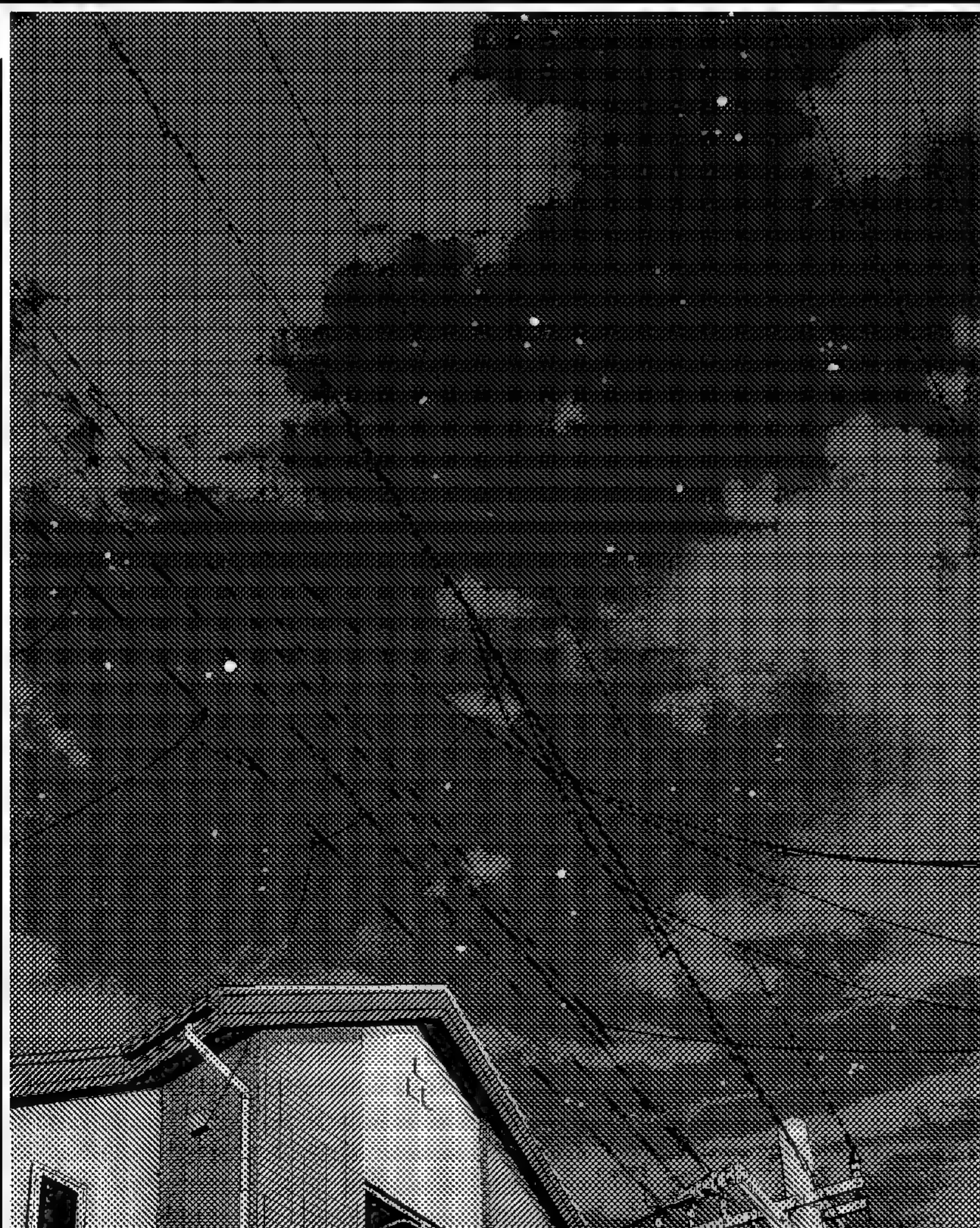




CHAPTER 130: THEIR LITTLE SECRET









SHE WAS
JUST A BIT
DIZZY.

GREAT
...

I GUESS
SHE STAYED
IN THE BATH
FOR TOO
LONG SINCE
SHE HADN'T
TAKEN ONE IN
A WHILE.



YOU'D
BETTER
THANK
HIM, HINA.

NATSUO-
KUN...



YES.
SHE
CAME
TO.

SHE'S
DOING
MUCH
BETTER
AFTER
VOMITING
A BIT.



HUH
...?

HE
FOUND YOU
COLLAPSED
IN THE
DRESSING
ROOM AND
CARRIED
YOU ALL THE
WAY HERE!

WHO
KNOWS WHAT
MIGHT HAVE
HAPPENED IF
NATSUO-KUN
HADN'T
SHOWED UP!



YOU CAN SAY THAT AGAIN.

AAH! I'M SO EMBARRASSED!

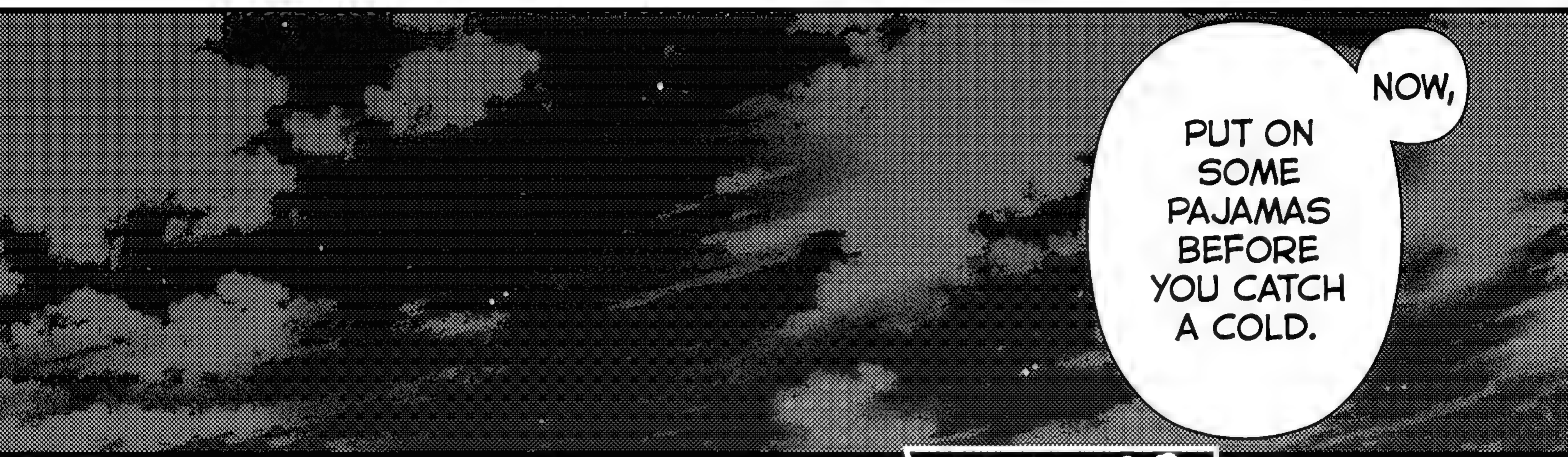
THINK OF HOW EMBARRASSING IT IS TO HAVE A GROWN DAUGHTER WHO STILL PASSES OUT NAKED IN THE BATHROOM.



I DON'T THINK SO...

WERE MY EYES ROLLED BACK?! I WASN'T DROOLING OR ANYTHING, WAS I?!

UM...!



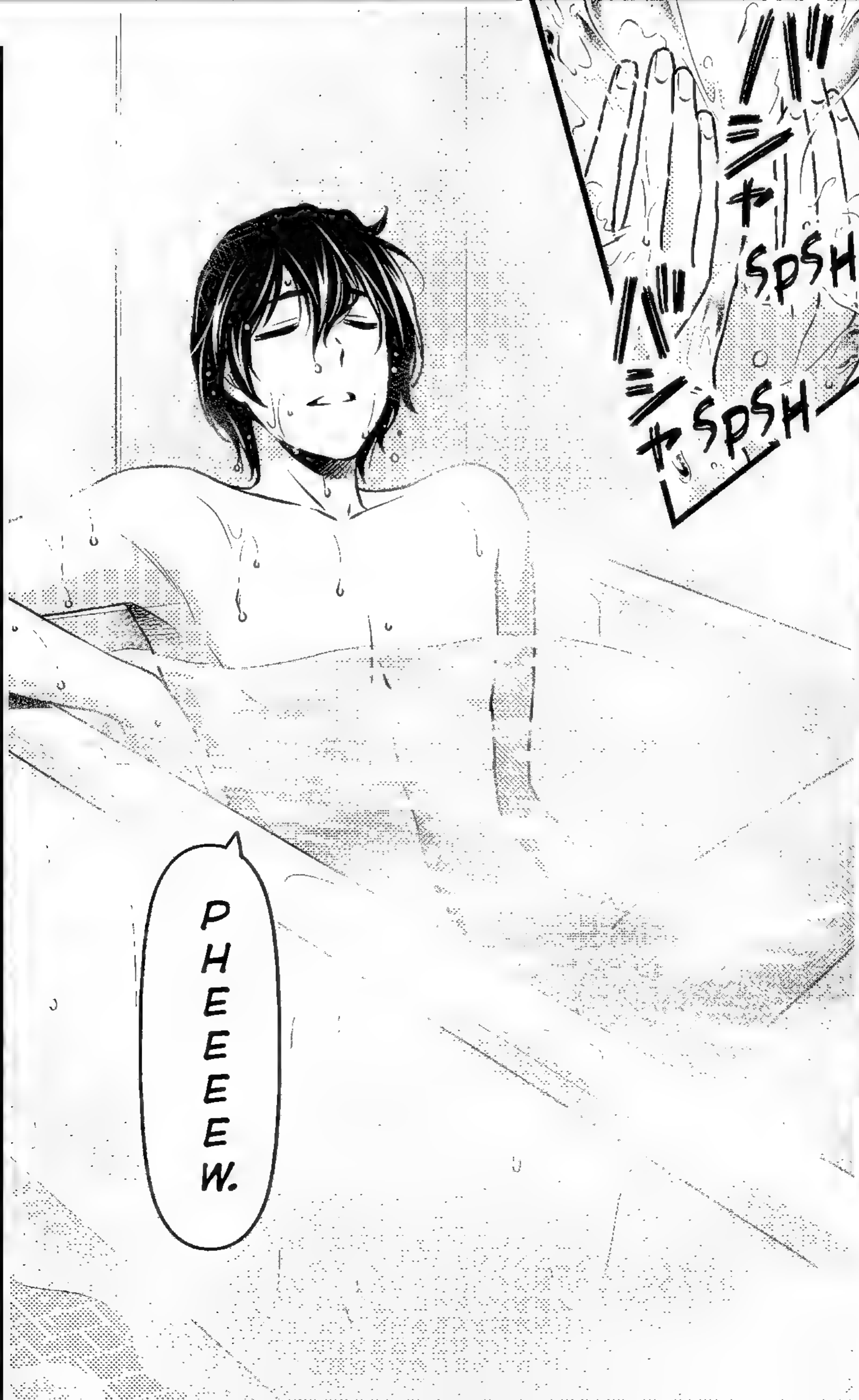
NOW, PUT ON SOME PAJAMAS BEFORE YOU CATCH A COLD.



OH, YEAH, I REMEMBER WHEN RUI...

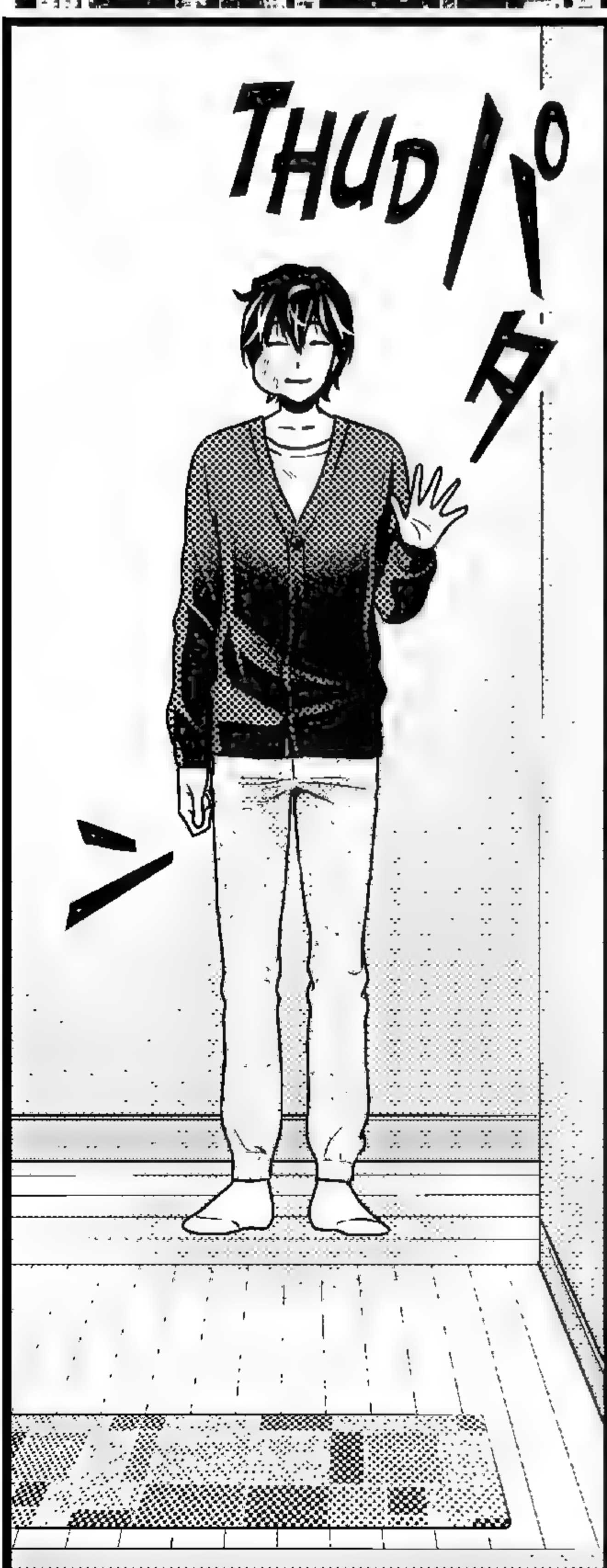
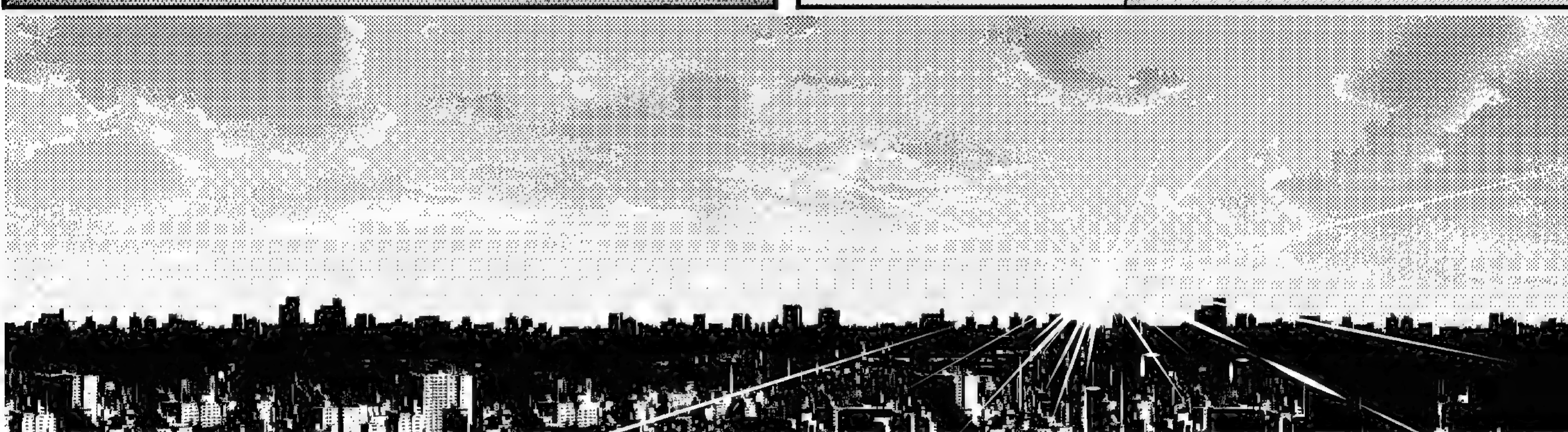
YOU PROBABLY JUST THOUGHT THEY AREN'T AS BIG AS HINA-NEE'S.

...WAS SELF-CONSCIOUS ABOUT THAT.



PHEEEW.







✪ B
✪ R
✪ R



✪ B
✪ R
✪ R



ハ
ハ
TMP

TMP
ハ
ハ

ハ
ハ
TMP



UH-HUH
...

SURE,
I JUST
THOUGHT
I'D ASK.

HOW
HAVE I
BEEN?
WE JUST
SAW EACH
OTHER
AT THE
AIRPORT
YESTER-
DAY.

WHAT
TIME
IS IT
THERE?



HM?

1:30 A.M.

IT'S
9:30 IN
JAPAN,
RIGHT?

YOU
DIDN'T
SET YOUR
WATCH TO
MATCH
THE TIME
THERE?

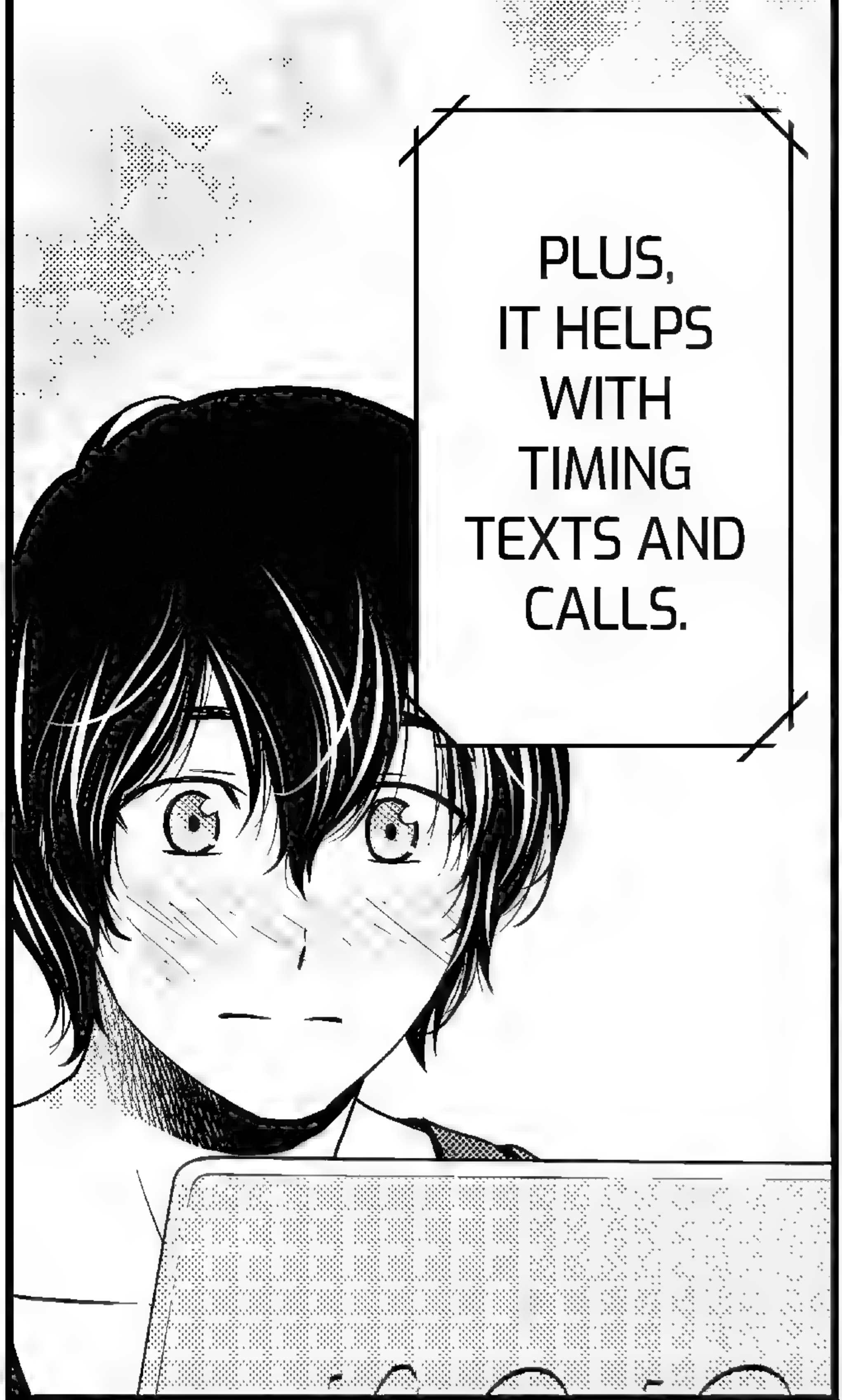


AH!

THERE
WE
GO.

HEY,
NATSUO!
HOW'VE
YOU
BEEN?





PLUS,
IT HELPS
WITH
TIMING
TEXTS AND
CALLS.



IT'S
EASIER
TO THINK
ABOUT
WHAT
YOU'RE
DOING.

NOPE.

I MEAN,
IF I KNOW
WHAT
TIME IT IS
FOR YOU,



OH, RIGHT.
I GOT HIT ON BY
LIKE 5 PEOPLE
WALKING DOWN
THE STREET.
I GUESS THAT'S
THAT LAND OF
AMORE FOR YOU.

I LOVE IT.
THE ARCHI-
TECTURE IS
GORGEOUS.

HOW DO
YOU LIKE
THE CITY
SO FAR?



I'LL
SET
MINE TO
ITALY
TIME.

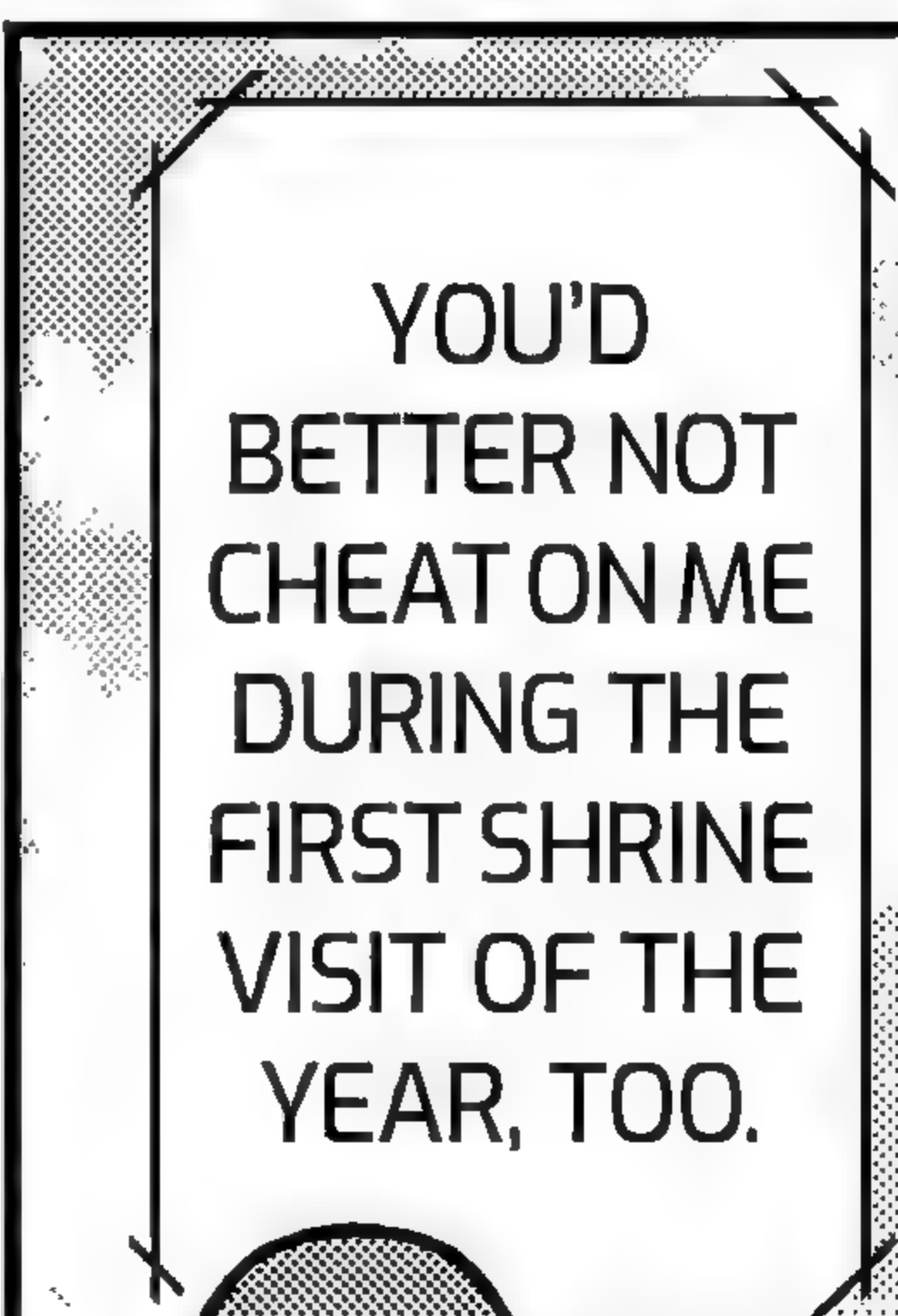
GOOD
POINT.



AND
EVERY-
THING'S
NEW AND
EXCIT-
ING,

THE
FOOD'S
DELI-
CIOUS,

I MEAN,
THE
SCENERY'S
GREAT,



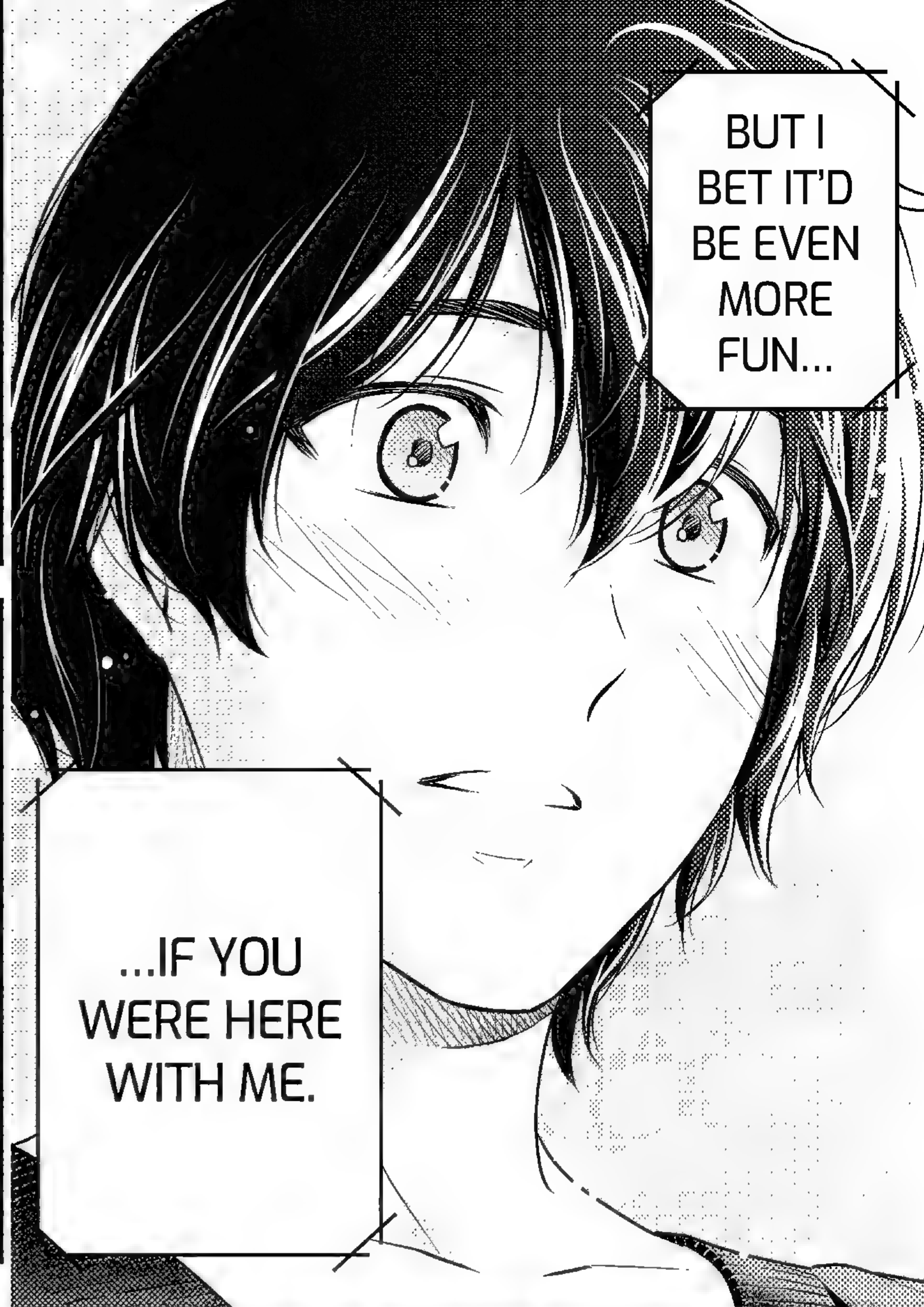
YOU'D
BETTER NOT
CHEAT ON ME
DURING THE
FIRST SHRINE
VISIT OF THE
YEAR, TOO.

LIKE
HELL I
WOULD!



WHA
...?

DON'T
SOUND SO
WORRIED.
AS IF I'D
ACTUALLY
GO WITH
THEM.



BUT I
BET IT'D
BE EVEN
MORE
FUN...



ACTU-
ALLY
...

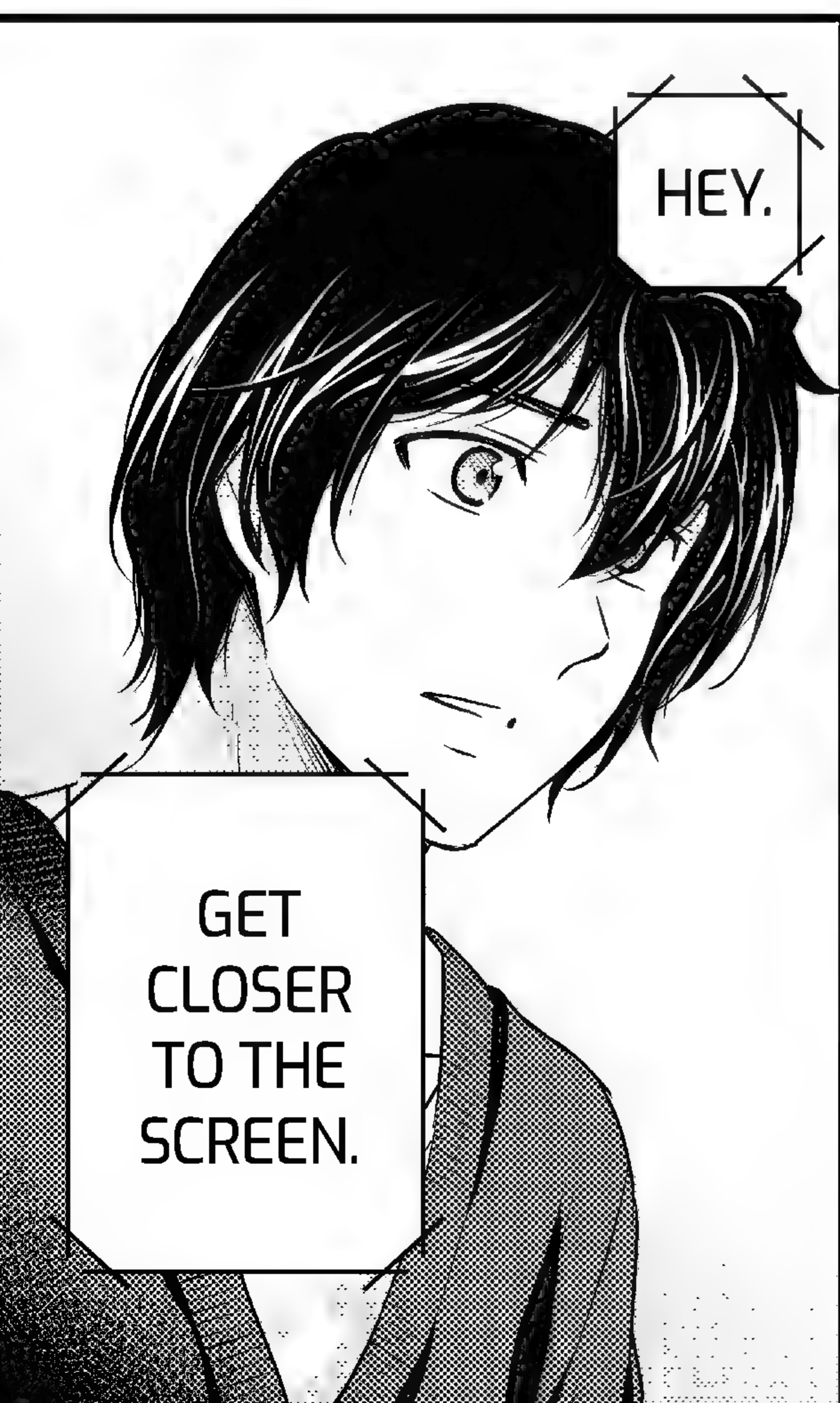
HEY,
RUI.

UM
...

...IF YOU
WERE HERE
WITH ME.



HM?



HEY.

GET
CLOSER
TO THE
SCREEN.



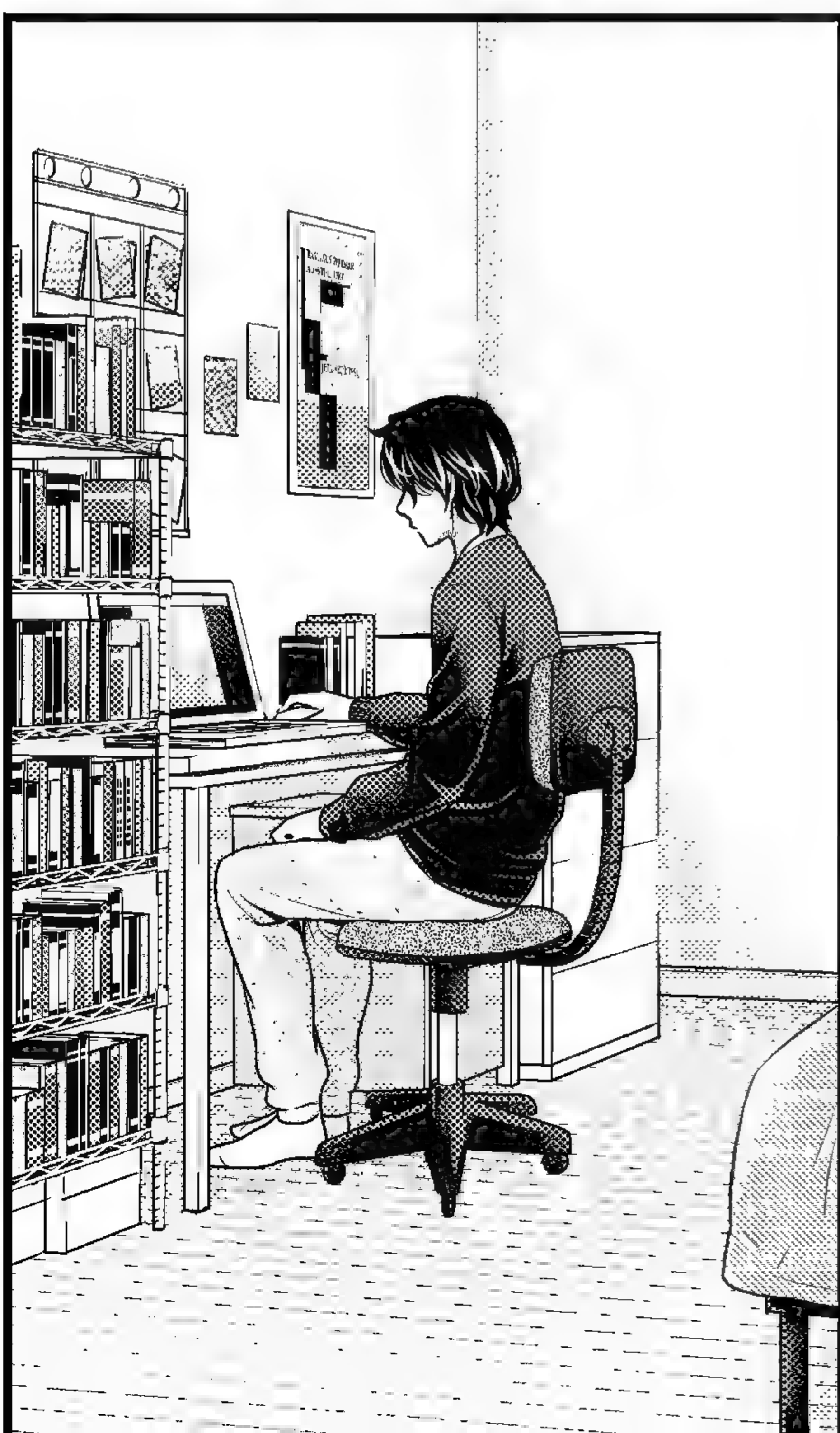
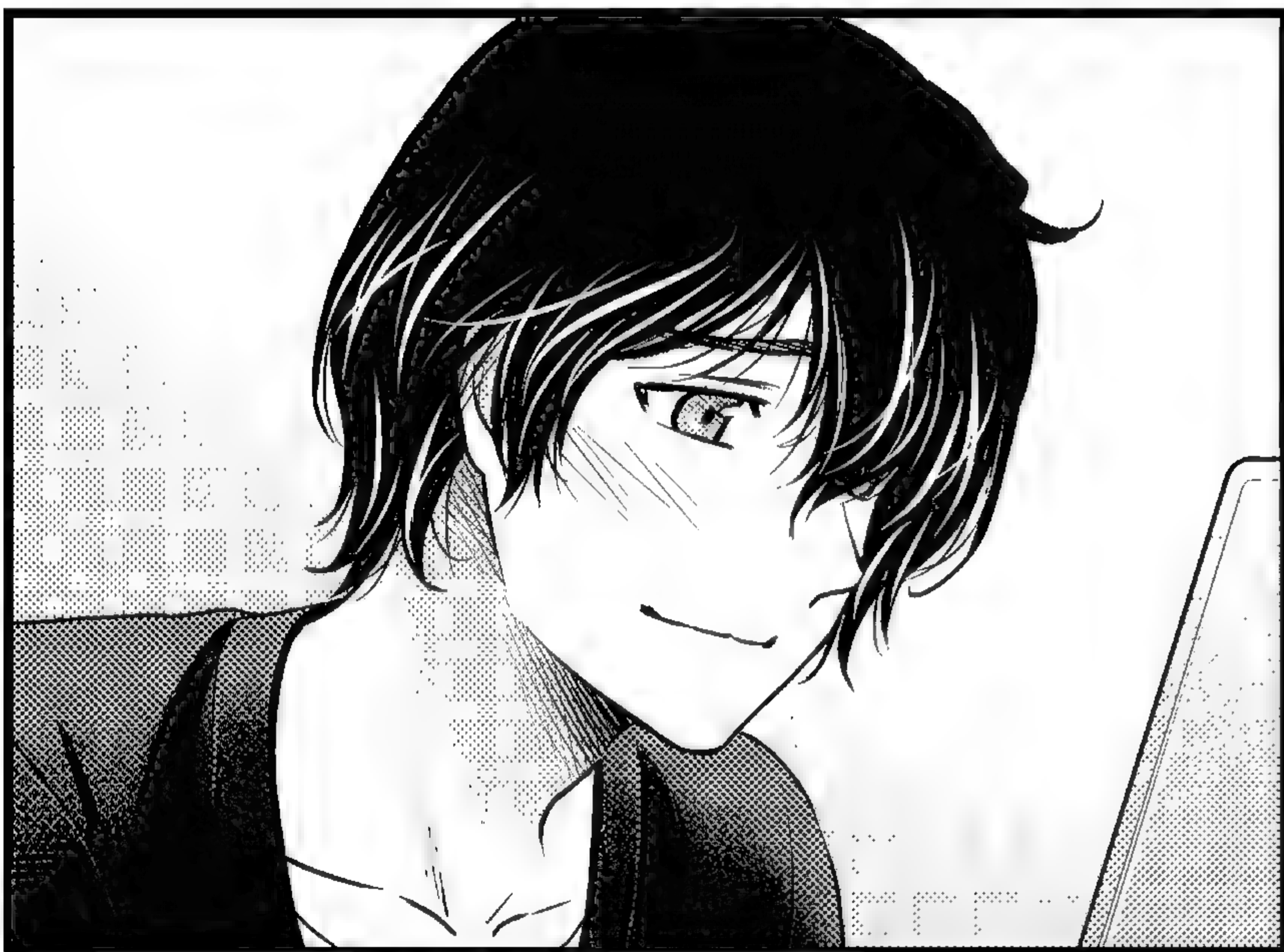
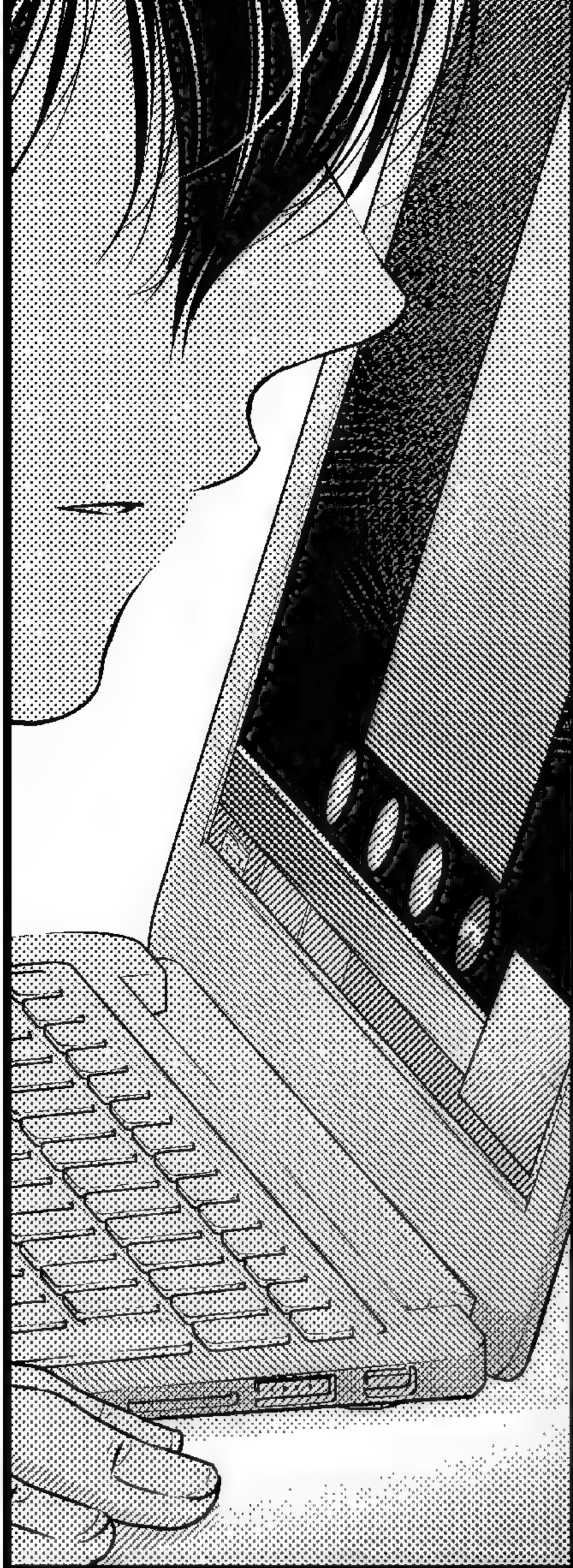
HEY, DON'T
LEAVE ME
HANGING
LIKE THAT.

NEVER
MIND.

...
NAH.

I JUST
MISS
YOU,
THAT'S
ALL.

IT'S
NOTH-
ING.



I, MEAN,

WHAT IF
TELLING
HER HINA'S
HOME...

...WIPES
THAT SMILE
OFF HER
FACE AND
MAKES HER
WORRY?

I
CAN'T
TELL
HER!

FWIP

AAAAH!

WHAT'S A DOMESTIC
BOYFRIEND SUPPOSED
TO DO?!

WE'RE
HOME!

OH.

CAN YOU
PUT THE
DRINKS
IN THE
FRIDGE?

ANY-
THING
I CAN
HELP
WITH?

WE
BOUGHT
PLENTY!

WEL-
COME
BACK.

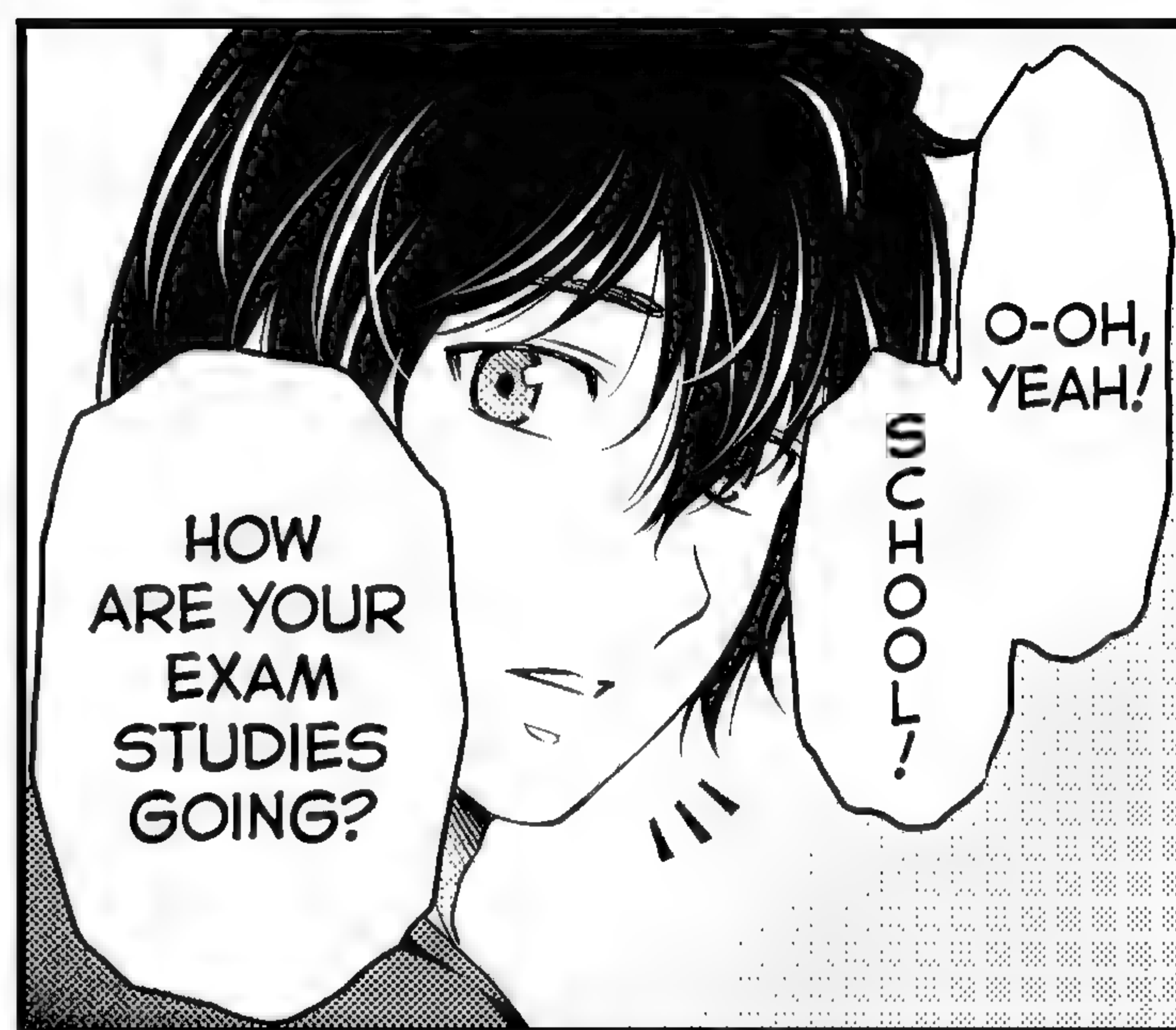
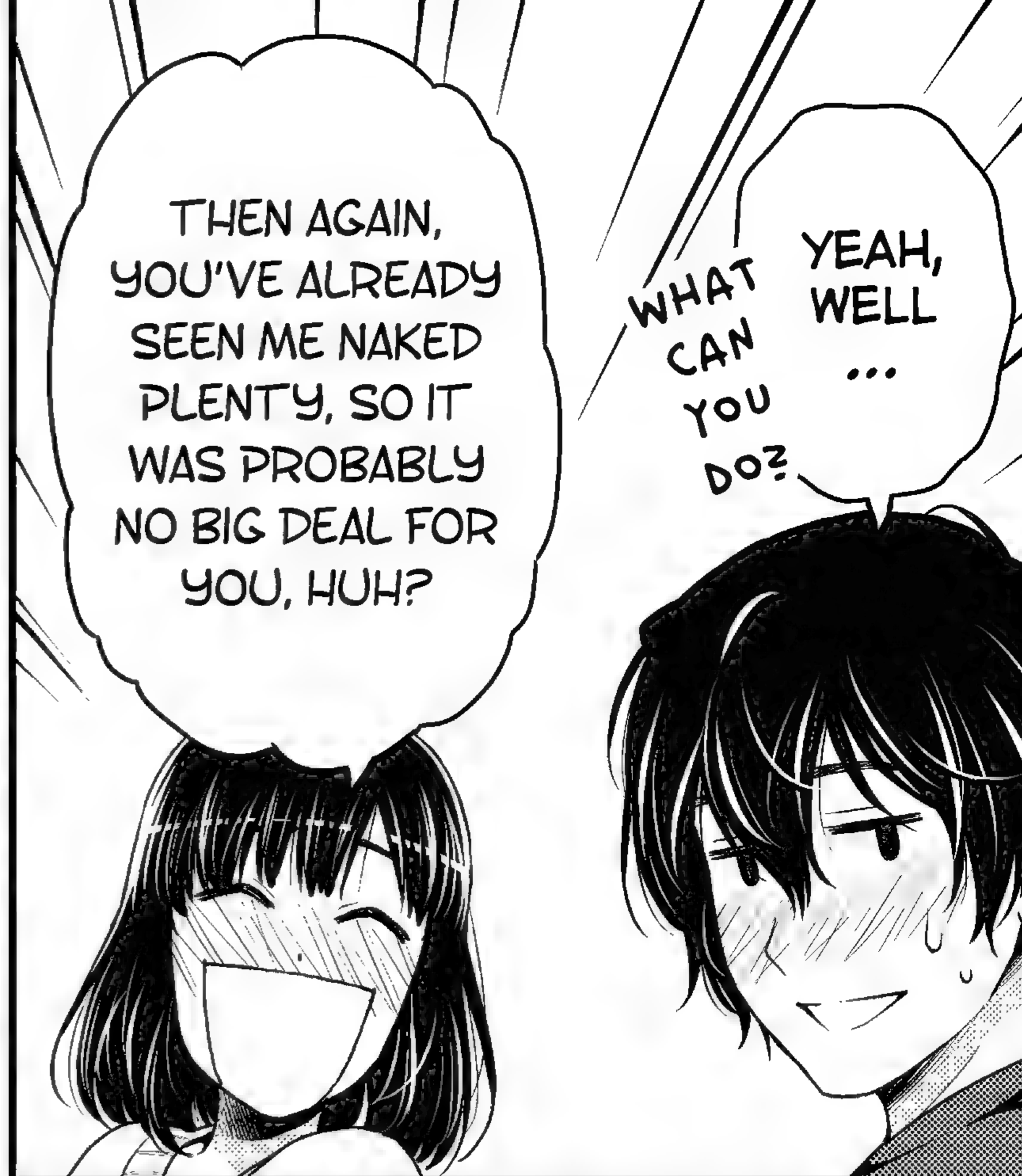
THERE'S
SUSHI,
CRAB...

ROAST
BEEF,
TOO.

WHERE
DID I PUT
THEM
LAST
YEAR?

OH, RIGHT.
WE HAVE TO
PUT UP THE
NEW YEAR'S
DECORA-
TIONS.







THAT'S
IT!

HINA-
NEE!



BUT I MADE
SURE TO
TELL HER
ABOUT US!

I DIDN'T TELL
YOU ABOUT HINA
BECAUSE I DIDN'T
WANNA MAKE
YOU WORRY!

I CAN
PROVE MY
LOYALTY
TO RUI!

THAT WAY,



BUT
THE
THING
IS, I-

KEEP THIS
FROM OUR
PARENTS,



UM
...



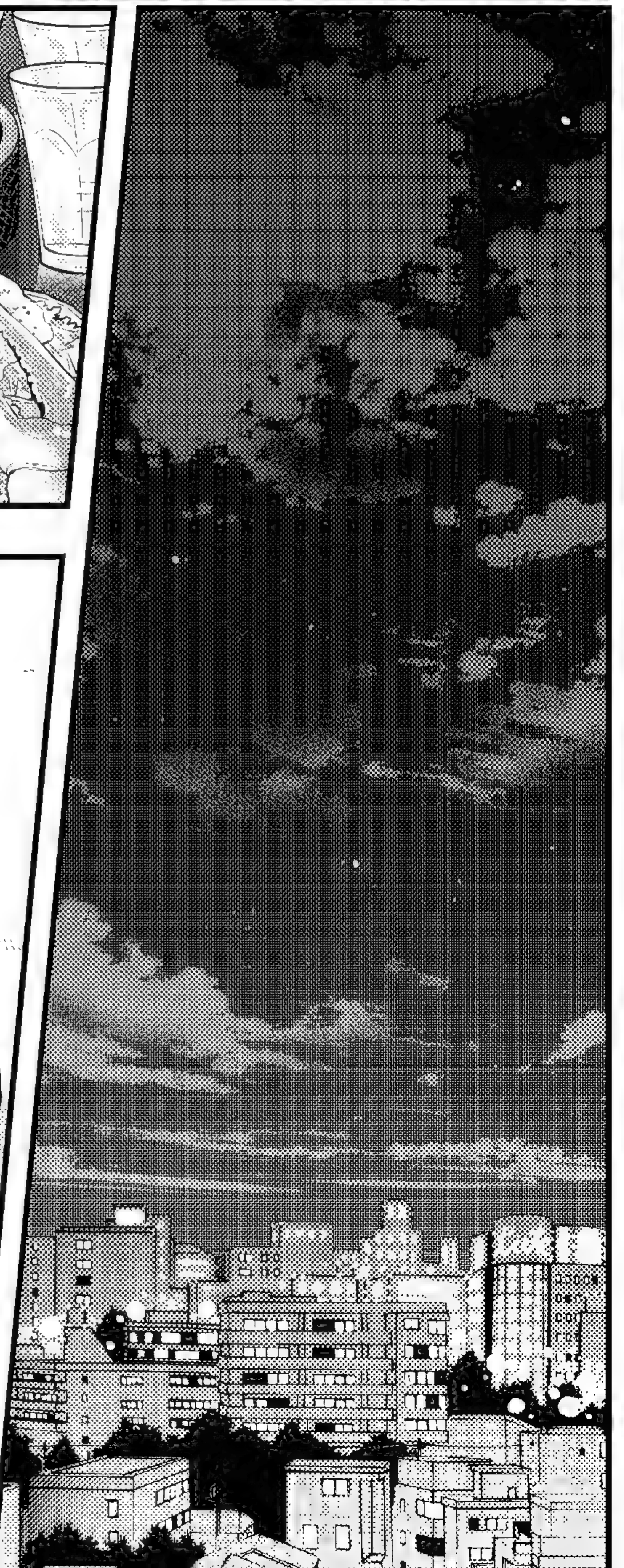
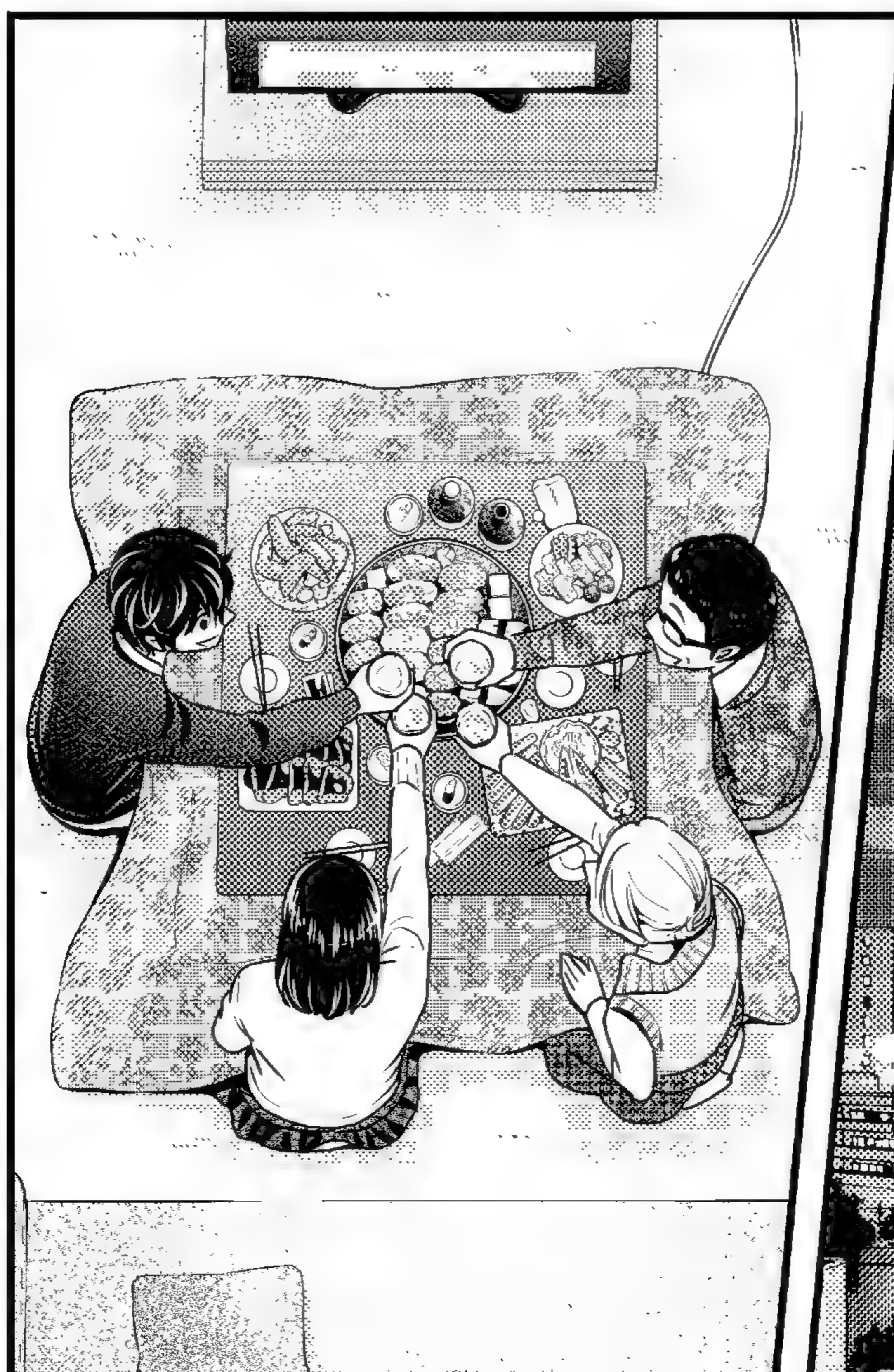
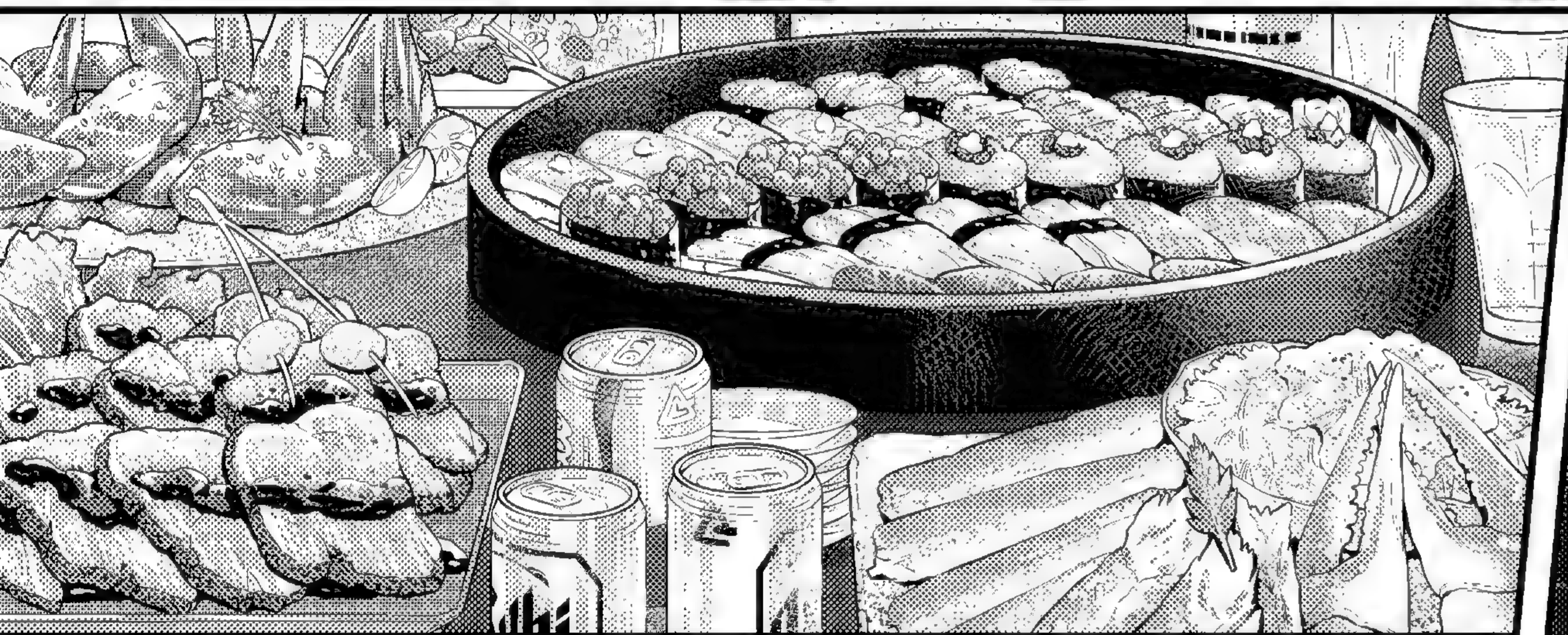
WE FOUND
THIS MOLDY
MOCHI CAKE
WHILE WE
WERE LOOKING
FOR THE PINE
DECORATIONS!
IT LOOKS LIKE
A LITTLE
FUR BALL!

AH HA HA
あはは

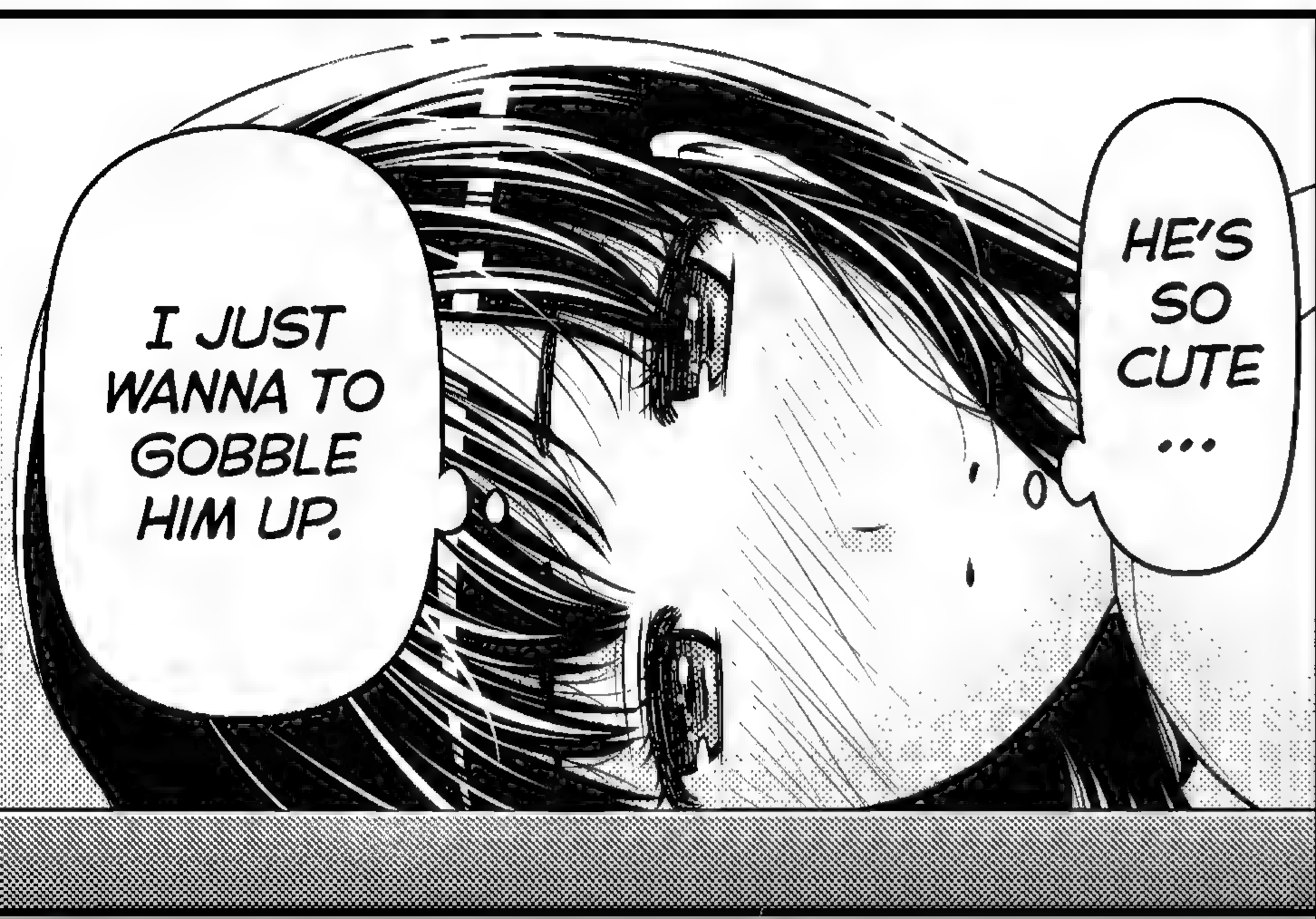
ははっ
HA HA

GET A
LOAD OF
THIS!

HEY!





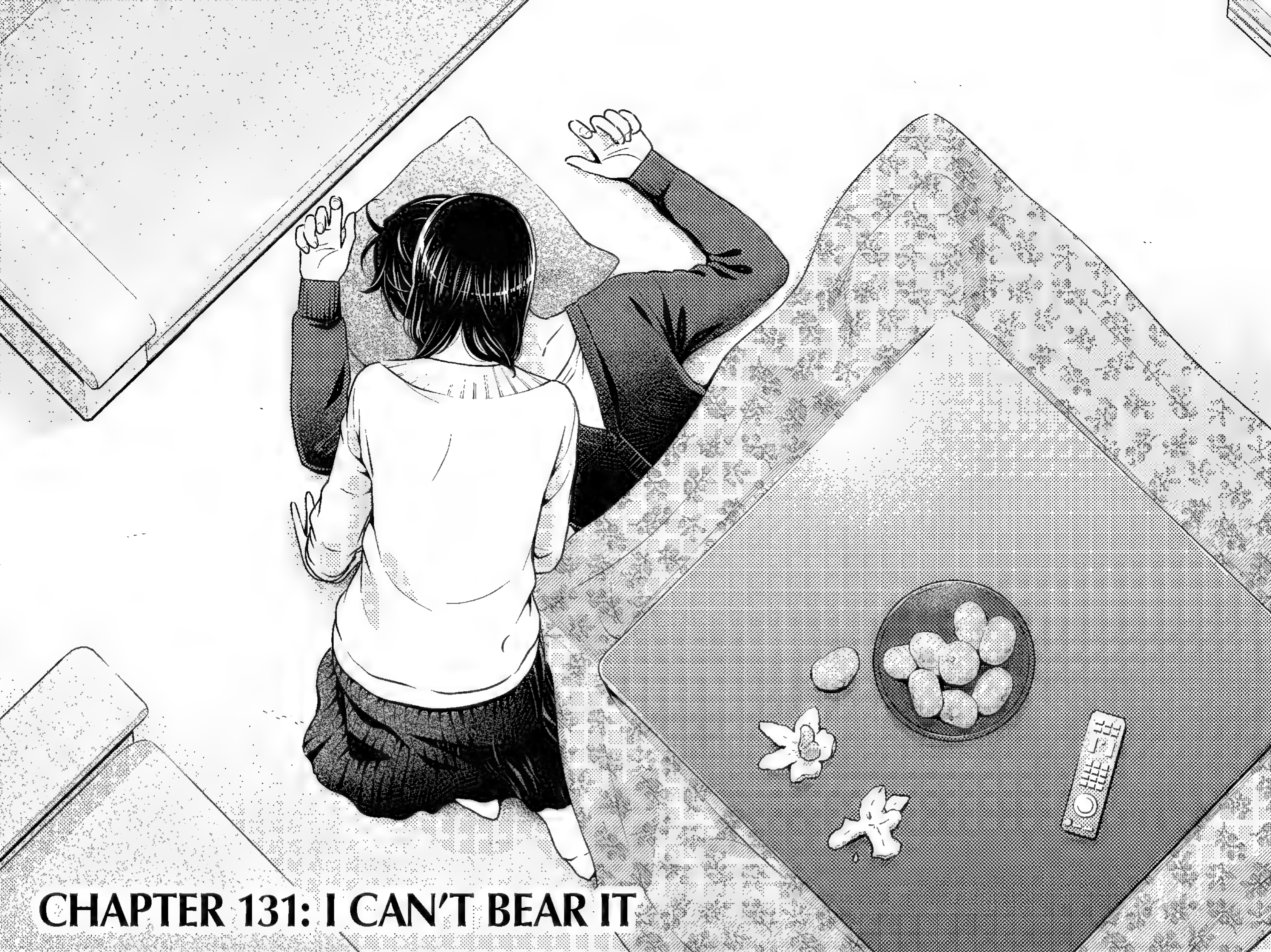




Natsuo-
kun.

I love
you,





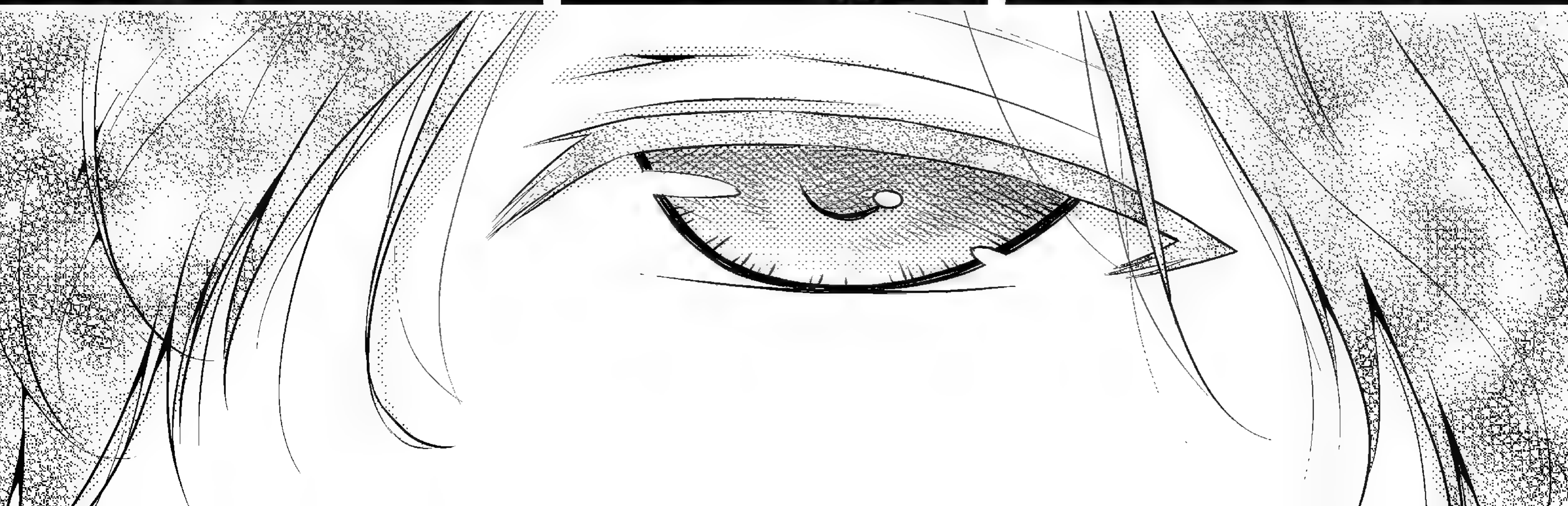
CHAPTER 131: I CAN'T BEAR IT



...FEEL JUST
LIKE HOW I
REMEMBER.



HIS LIPS...









I
LAUGHED
MYSELF
TO TEARS
...

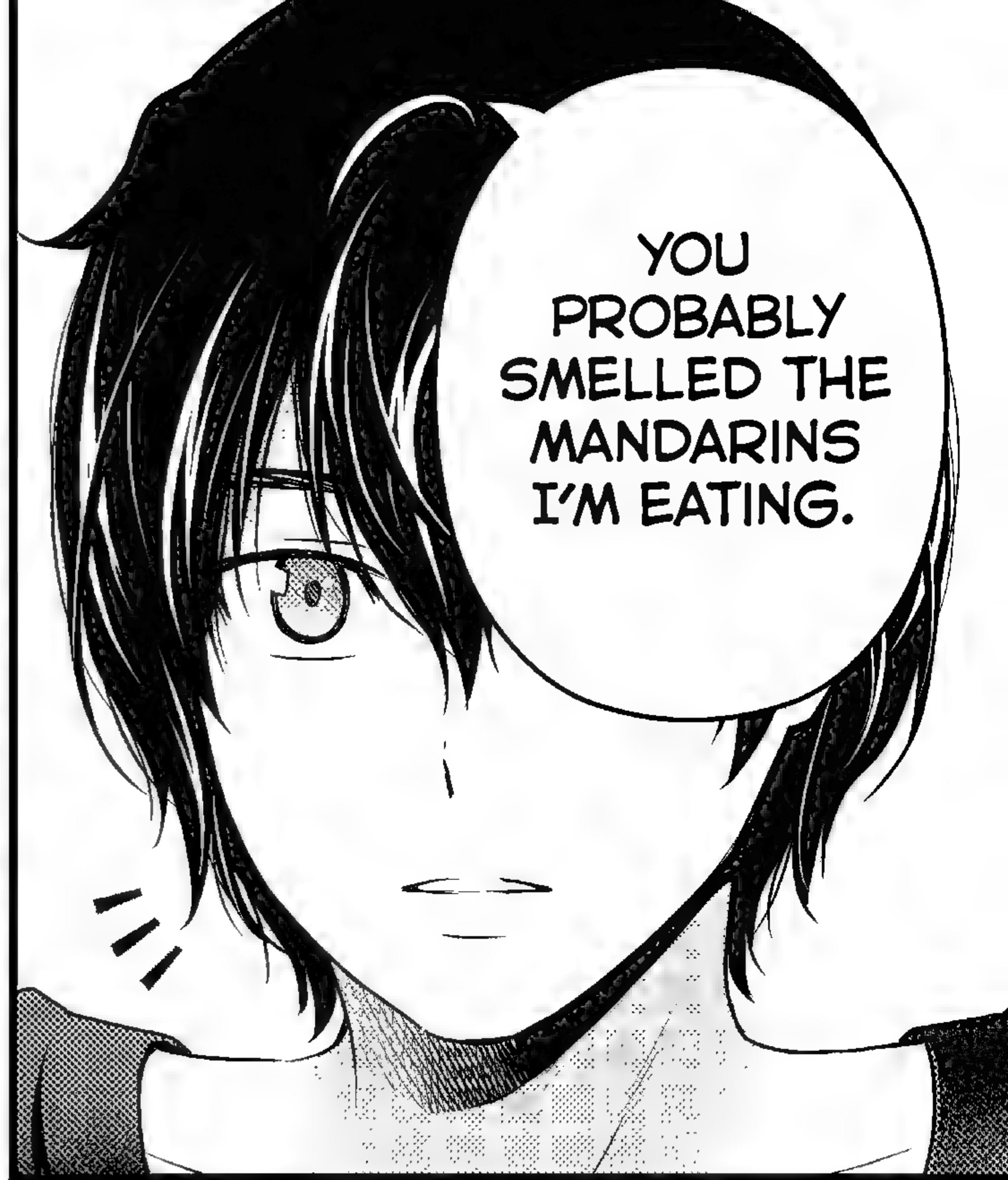
THE
COMEDIAN
THAT WAS
JUST ON
MADE THIS
HILARIOUS
JOKE.

WHAT?!
OHH
...



ARE YOU
CRYING,
HINA-NEE?

HUH
...?



YOU
PROBABLY
SMELLED THE
MANDARINS
I'M EATING.



I KNOW
A LOT
HAPPENED
LAST
YEAR,

UM
...

THAT'S
RIGHT.
I NEED TO
TELL HER
ABOUT RUI
AND ME.



OH.

I WISH
I'D
SEEN
IT...

HUH
...



YEAH
...

UH
...



IT
DOESN'T
FEEL LIKE
A GOOD
TIME.

MAYBE
NOT.

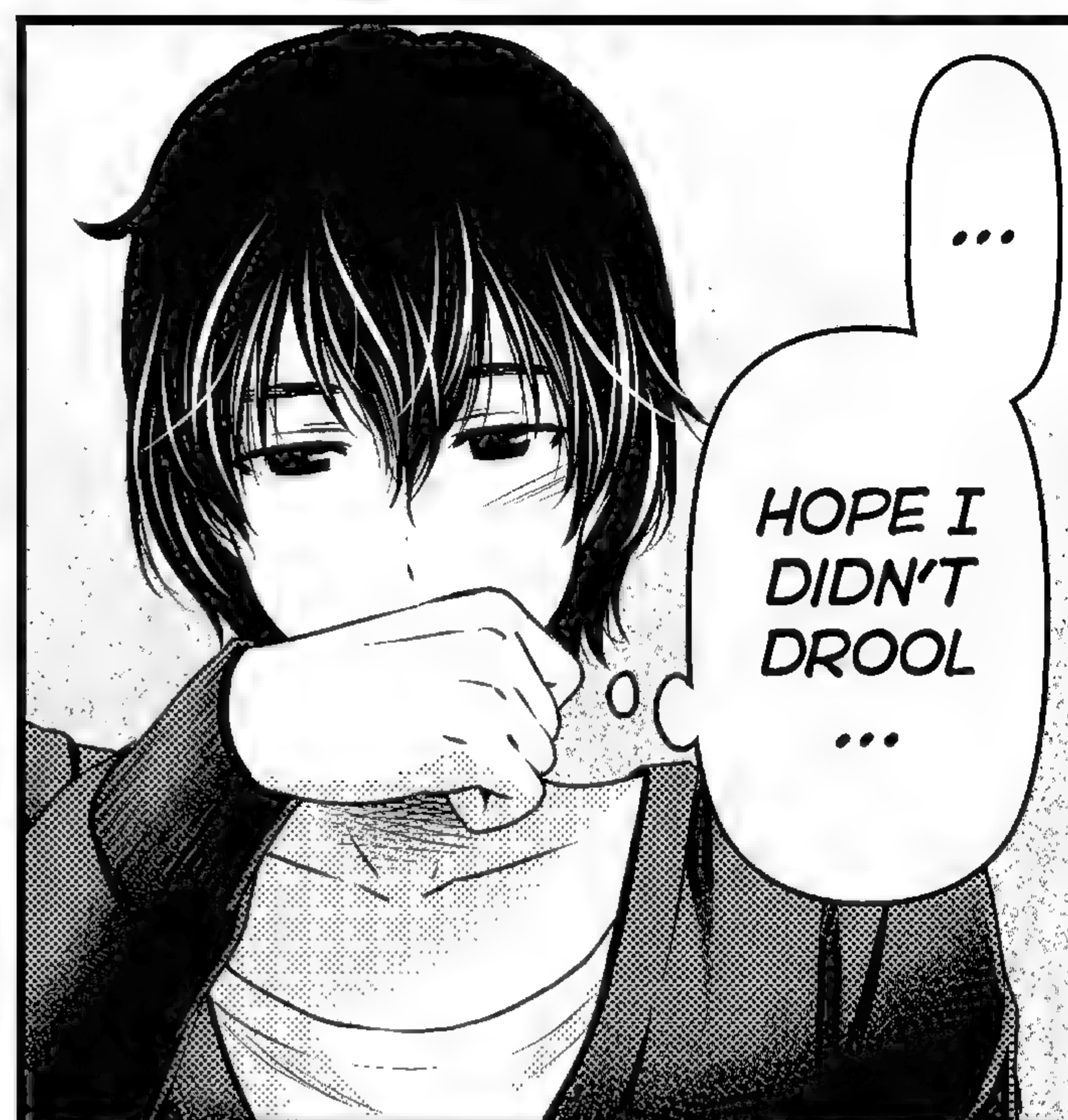


...A
GOOD
YEAR FOR
BOTH OF
US.

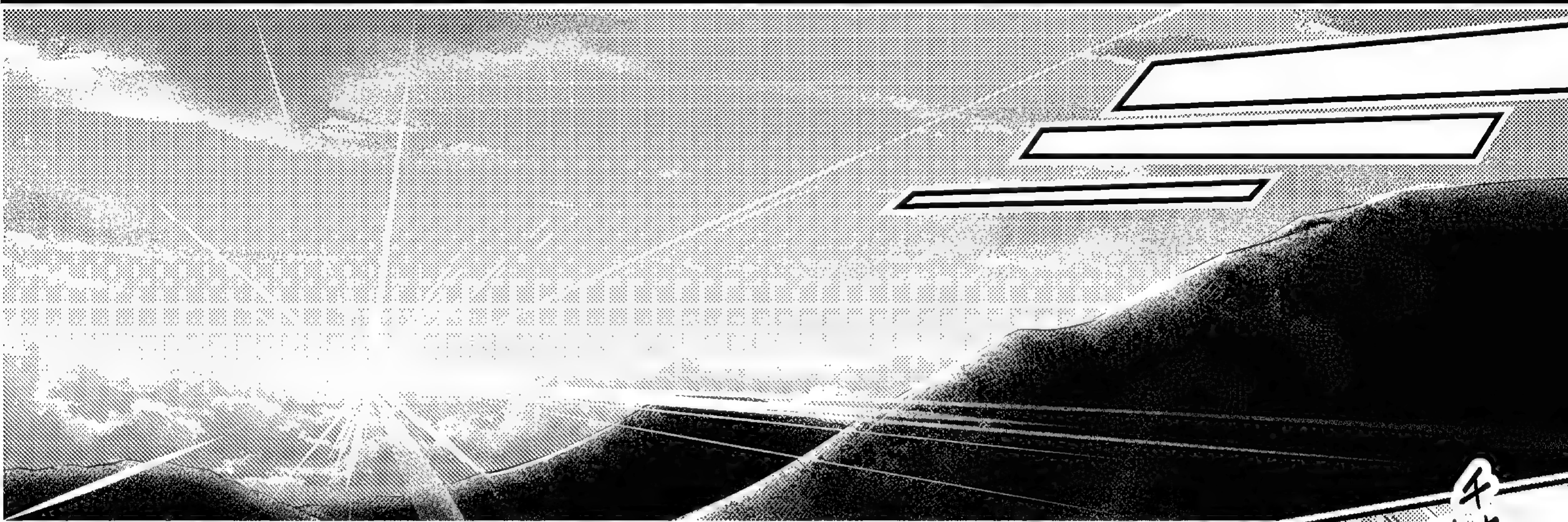
BUT I
HOPE WE
CAN MAKE
THIS ONE
...



*SEE TL NOTES



RIGHT?



*ZONI: A TRADITIONAL JAPANESE NEW YEAR'S SOUP CONTAINING MOCHI RICE CAKES.







SHOULD WE WISH FIRST?

I SAW ON TV THAT IT'S BETTER TO BUY CHARMS FIRST.



I MADE SURE IT WAS AT 100 PERCENT ...

GOOD.

IS YOUR PHONE CHARGED ?

SURE. TRY NOT TO STAY OUT TOO LATE, OKAY?

I'M GONNA LOOK FOR MY FRIENDS.



HAPPINESS AND HEALTH FOR MY FAMILY, OF COURSE.

HEY, MOM. WHAT'D YOU WISH FOR?

WHAAAT? THAT'S IT?



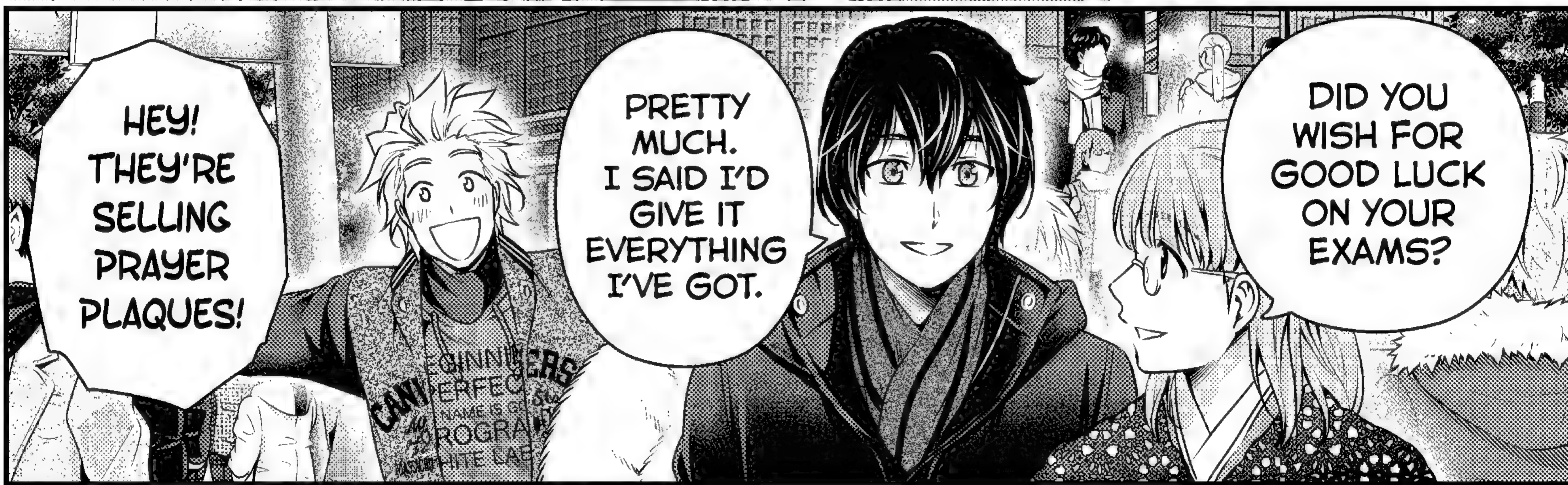
MY, WHAT'S GOTTEN INTO YOU?

OH, Y'KNOW.



WRAP!!



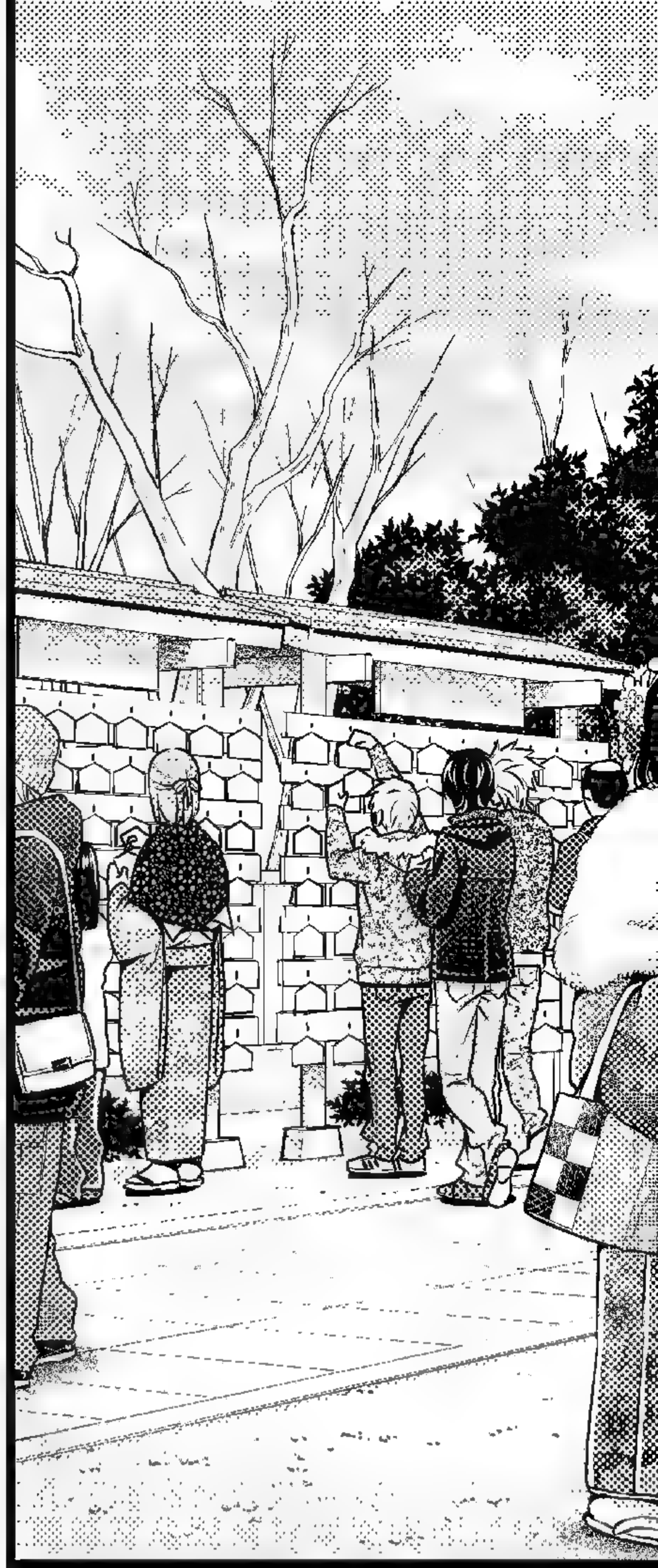






May I get into my
first-choice school
and become a
prolific writer.

Natsuo Fujii



THERE!

May I
first-
an
P

And may
I make
my loved
ones
happy.



WANNA GET
COFFEE AT
L'AMANT?

WHAT
SHOULD
WE DO
AFTER
THIS?

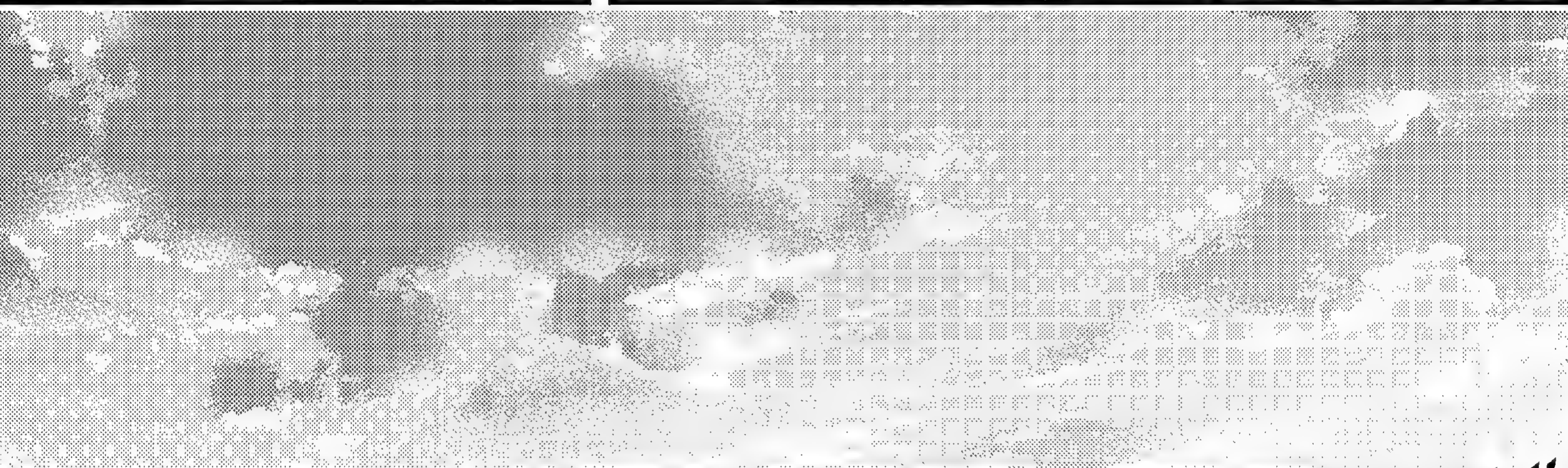
I'M
THERE!



A GUIDEBOOK
TO PERIOD
PLAYS FROM
THE 80S AND A
DVD TITLED *HUNT
FOR THE WHITE
HOUSE'S BURIED
TREASURE!*

WHAT'D
YOU
BORROW
FROM
THEM?

I'VE
NEVER SEEN
ANYONE LIE
WITH SUCH
A STRAIGHT
FACE
BEFORE.



POLISH-
ING YOUR
BOOTS?

YEAH.
THEY GOT
PRETTY
DIRTY
SHUFFLING
AROUND
IN THE
CROWD.

YOU'RE
HOME
PRETTY
EARLY.



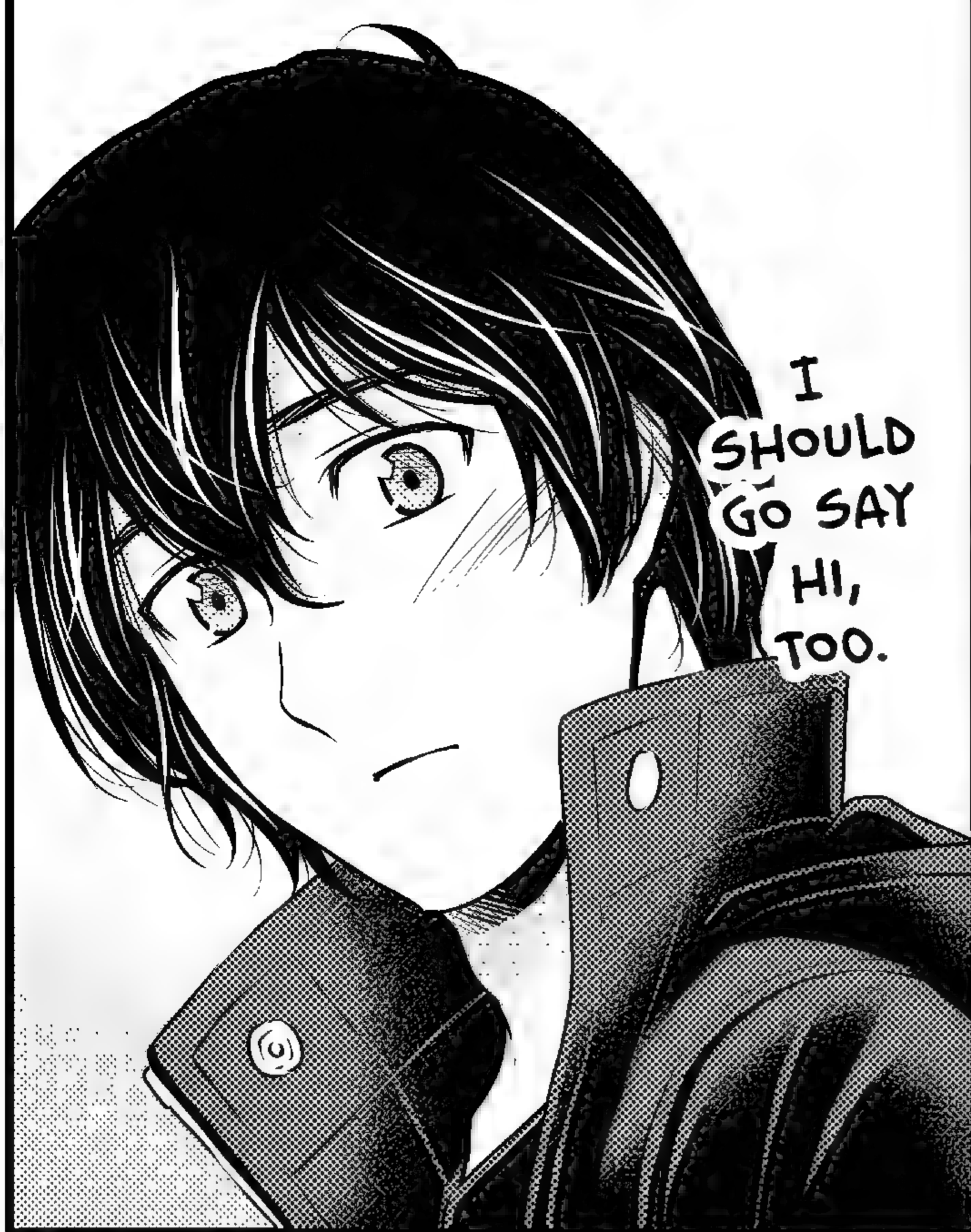
OH.

WELCOME
BACK,
NATSUO-
KUN.



CHACK
チカ

I'M
HOME.



I
SHOULD
GO SAY
HI,
TOO.



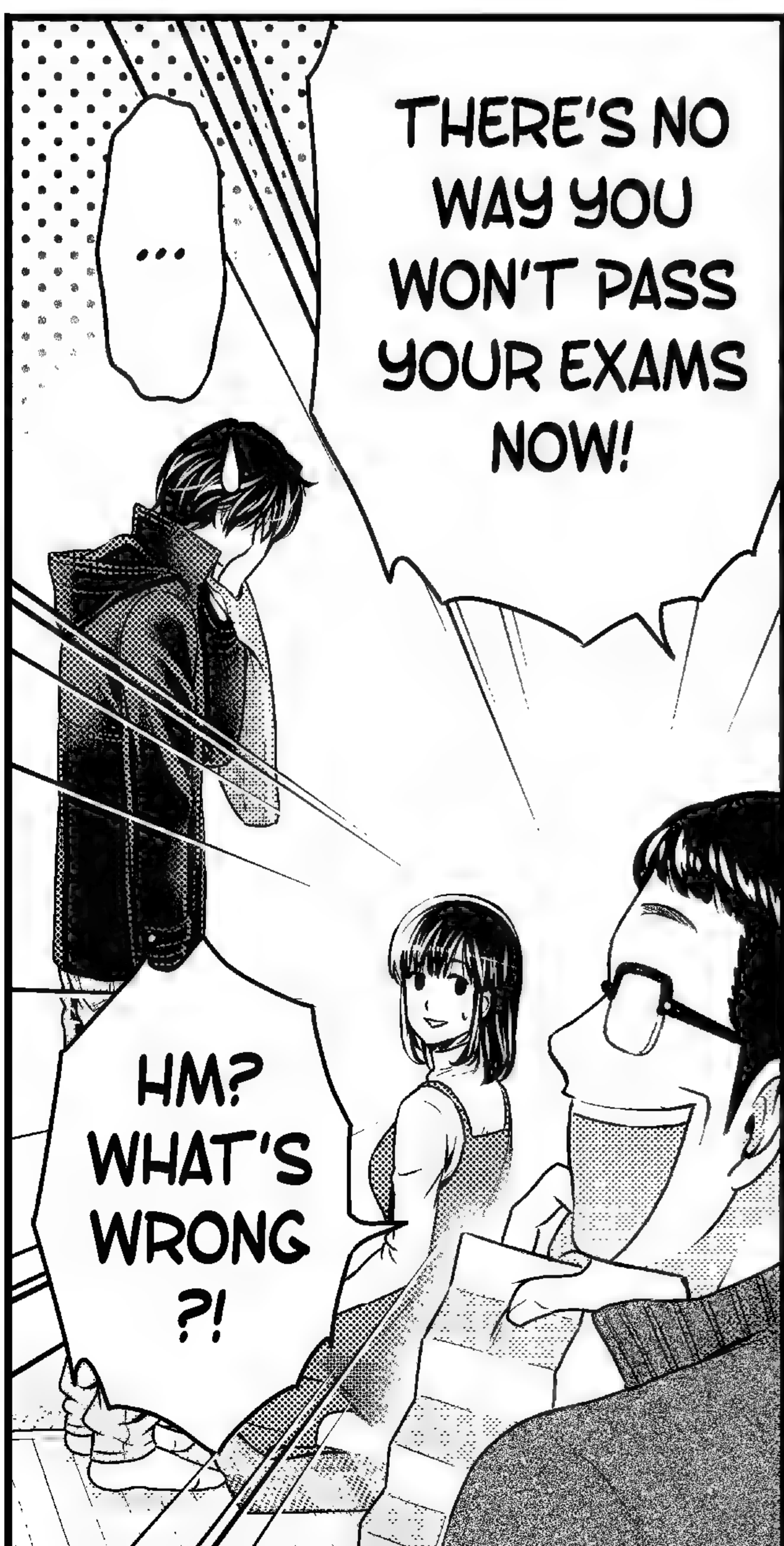
OH,
COOL.

WE JUST
GRABBED
COFFEE AT
L'AMANT
AFTER THE
SHRINE
VISIT.



THE
TRUTH
IS,

H-
HEY,
HINA-
NEE.



...
THERE'S NO
WAY YOU
WON'T PASS
YOUR EXAMS
NOW!

HM?
WHAT'S
WRONG
?!



DID YOU
PULL YOUR
FORTUNE
AT THE
SHRINE?!

I GOT
"OUT-
STANDING
LUCK"!

RU-
HEY,
NATSUO!



ANOTHER
BUST.

UUUGH.



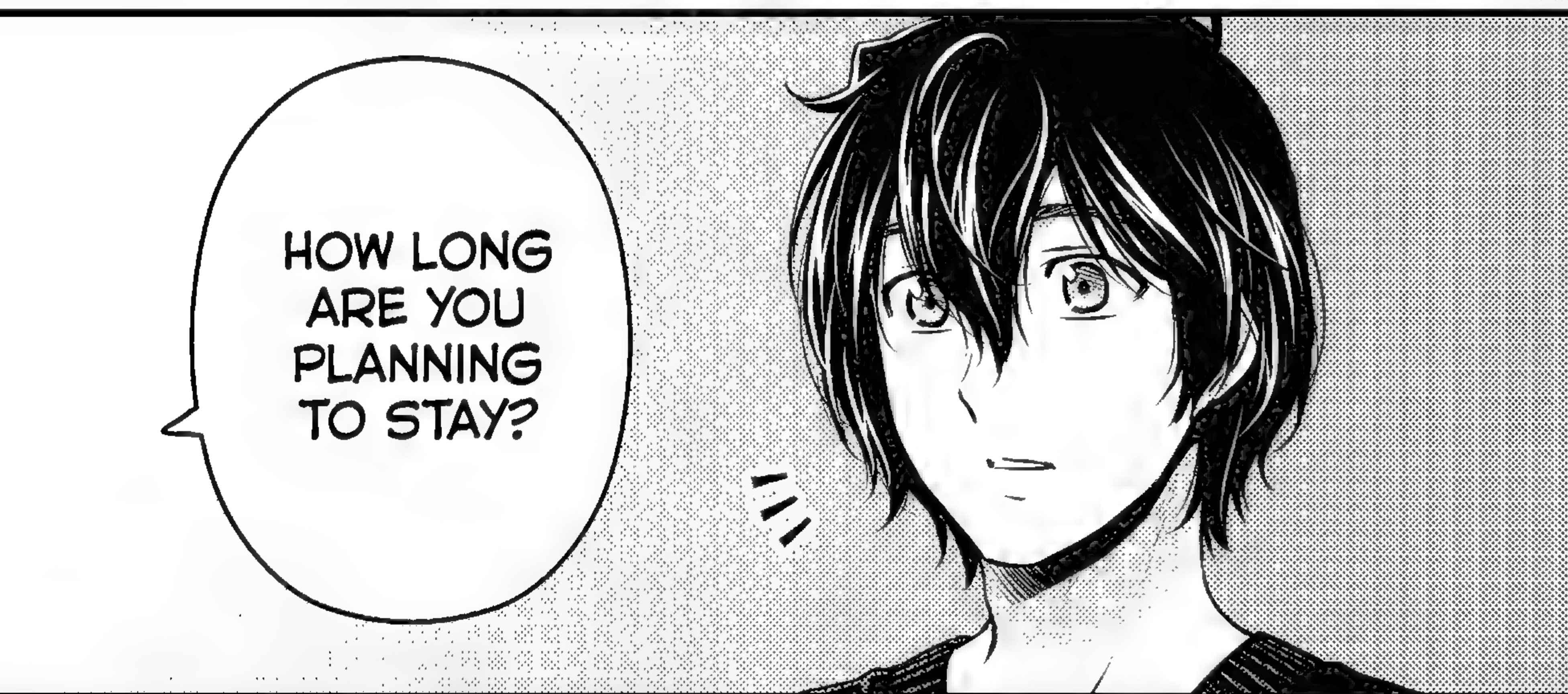
OH.

I'M
OUT
OF
TEA
...



I FEEL
REST-
LESS.

I CAN
BARELY
GET ANY
TIME
ALONE
WITH
HINA.



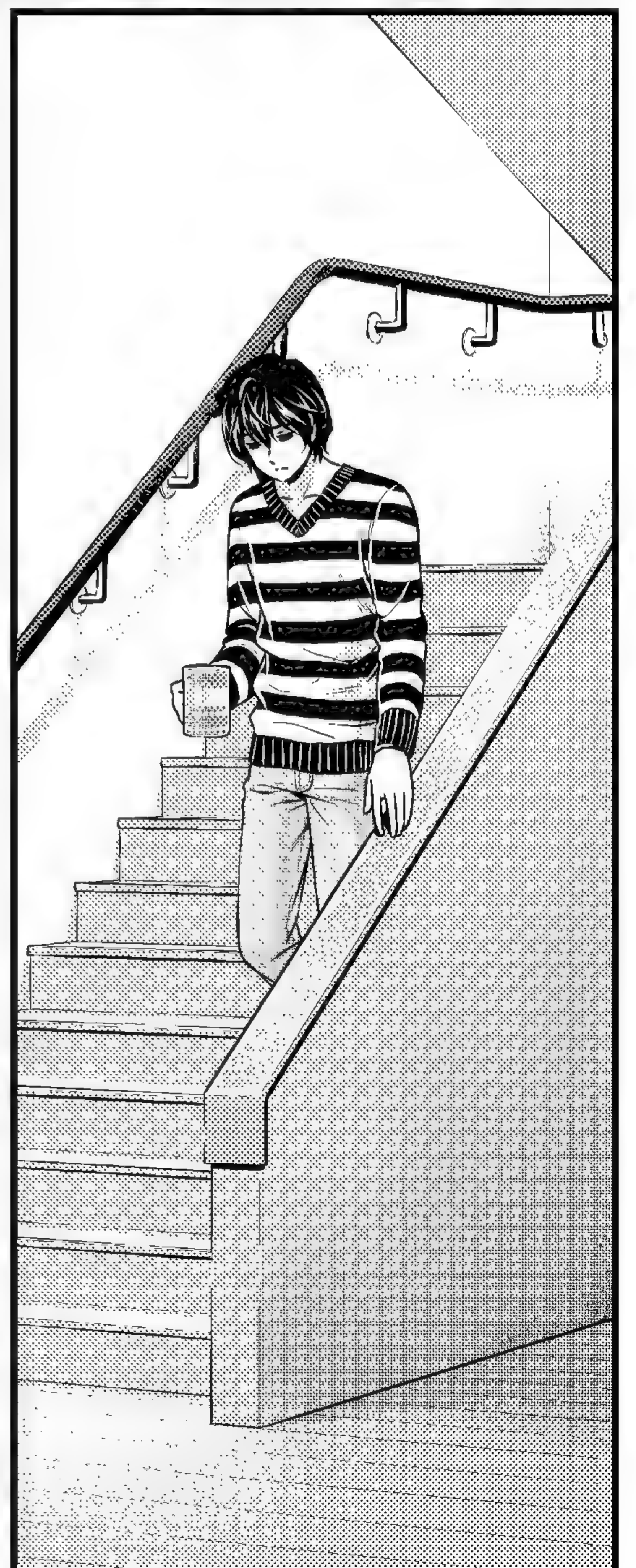
HOW LONG
ARE YOU
PLANNING
TO STAY?



I
SEE.

WHY DON'T
YOU STAY FOR
LONGER?
IT IS WINTER
BREAK,
AFTER ALL.

I'M GOING
BACK TO
OSHIMA ON
THE THIRD.





IT'S BEEN A WHILE SINCE I'VE BEEN IN A CROWD LIKE THAT. ALL THE PEOPLE MADE ME DIZZY.

THE AMAZAKE* WAS GOOD, TOO.

THAT WAS A FUN SHRINE VISIT.



THEY'RE HAVING A MOTHER-DAUGHTER DRINKING SESSION? IT'S KINDA HARD TO BUTT IN...

YEAH, BUT I HAVE CLUB TO WORRY ABOUT.

*A SWEET DRINK MADE FROM FERMENTED RICE.



THAT'S GOOD TO HEAR.

REAL-
LY?

AFTER I GET BACK,



IT'S NOT SO BAD. THAT MEANS YOUR LUCK CAN ONLY GET BETTER AS THE YEAR GOES ON.

TOO BAD I PULLED "MEAGER LUCK," THOUGH.



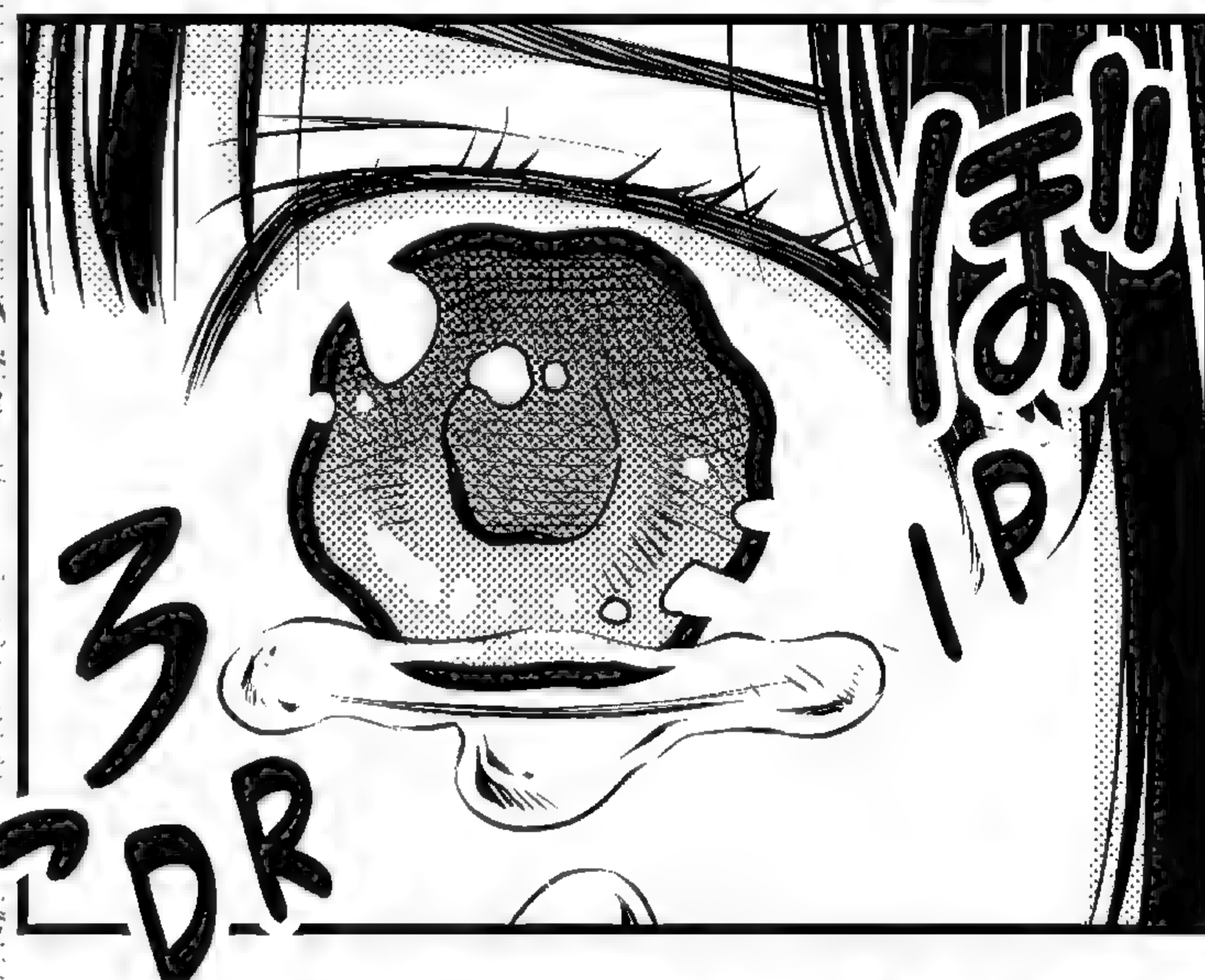
SOR-
RY...

HA,
HA...

HINA
...



I'LL DO MY BEST ON MY OWN AGAIN...



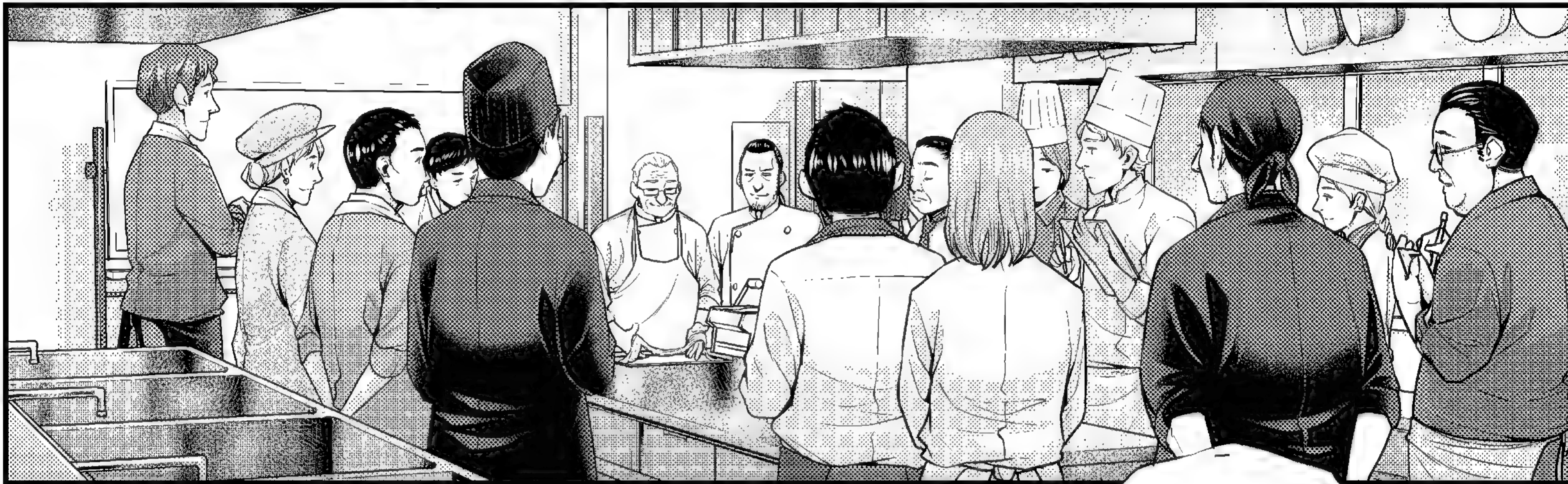


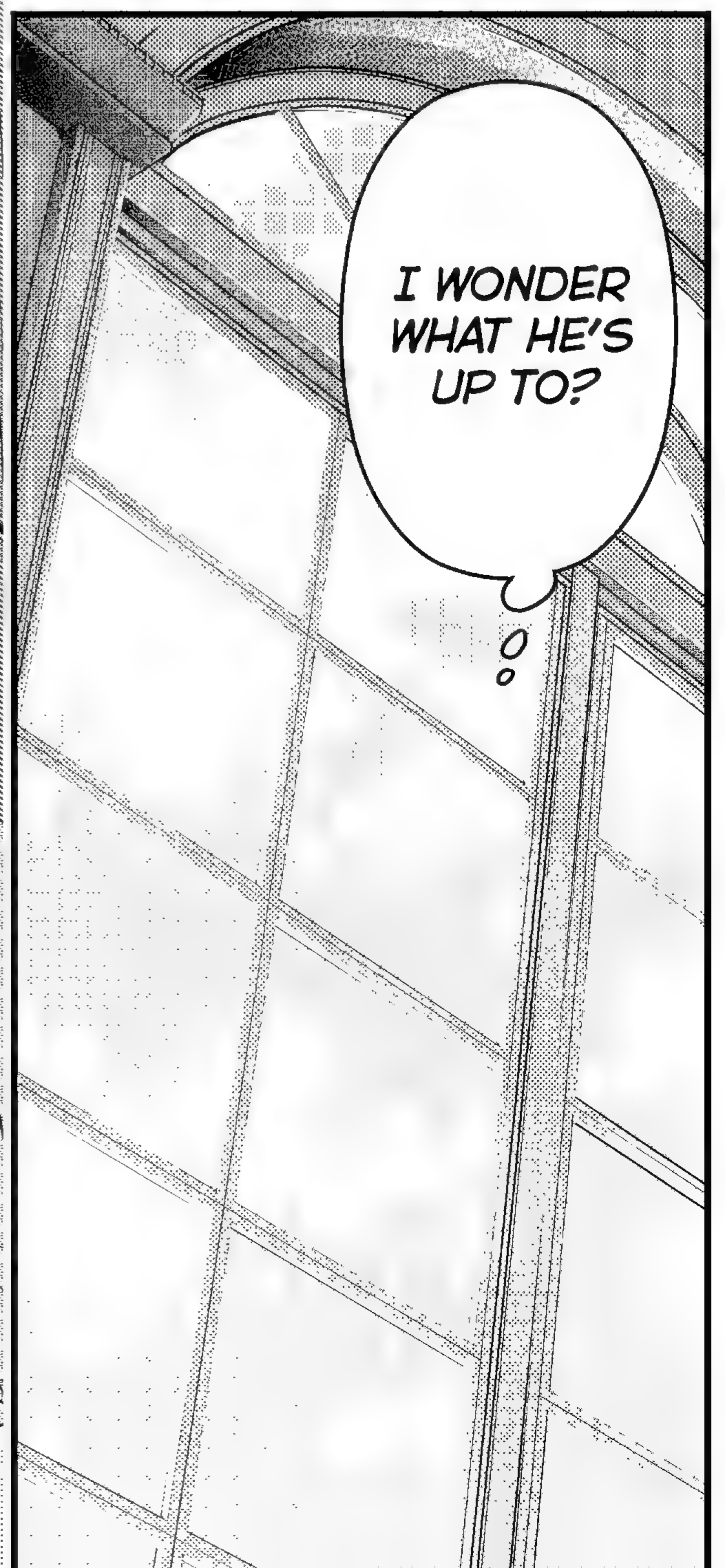
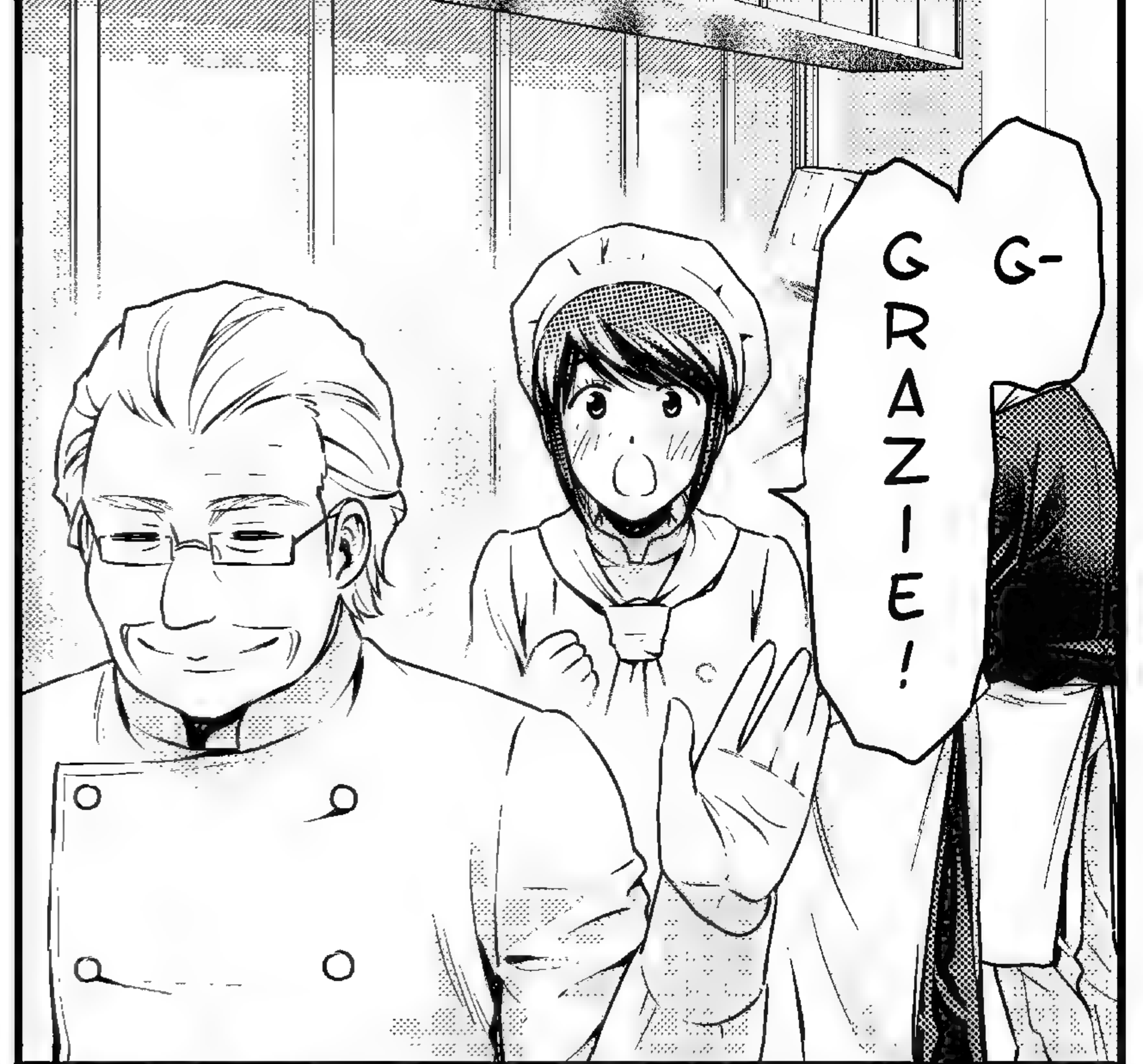
OH, DEAR ...





CHAPTER 132:
ATONEMENT & DETERMINATION







IT
HURTS,
MOM.



I SEE...



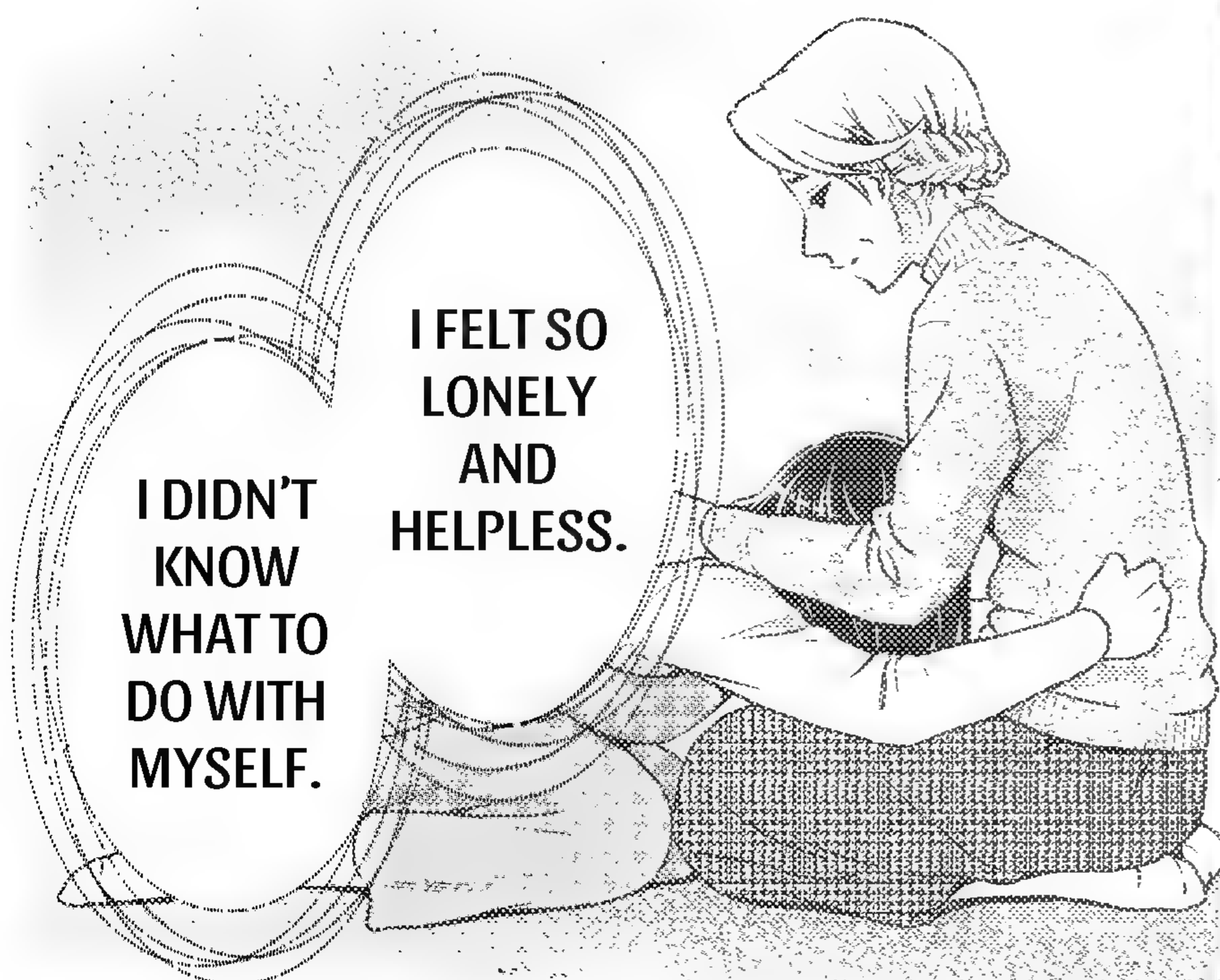
IT WAS
ALWAYS MY
GOAL TO
BECOME A
TEACHER.

BUT
SOME-
WHERE
ALONG
THE LINE
...

...I LOST
SIGHT OF
WHY I WAS
WORKING
SO HARD.

**SHE
WAS ONLY
PRETENDING
TO BE ALL
RIGHT...**

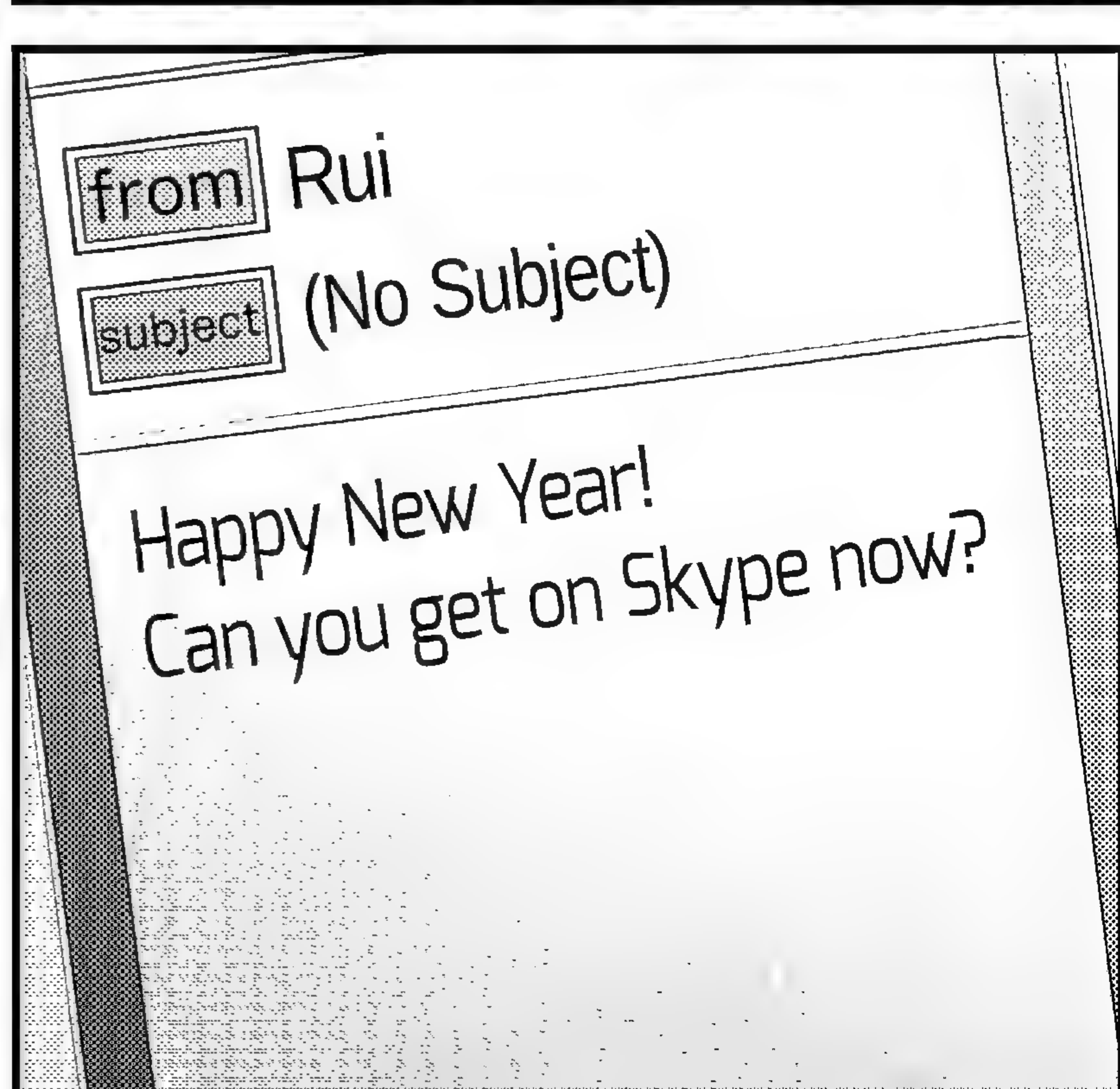
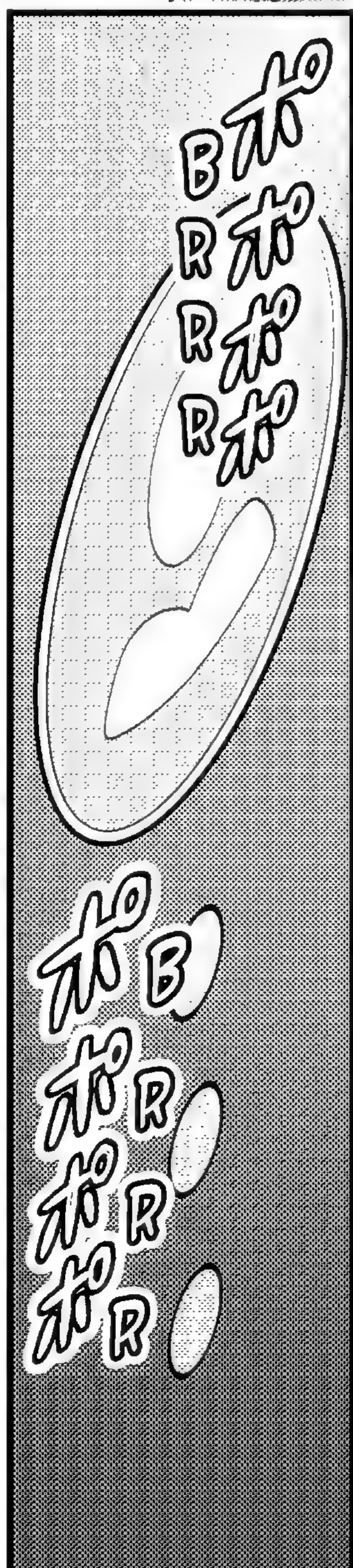
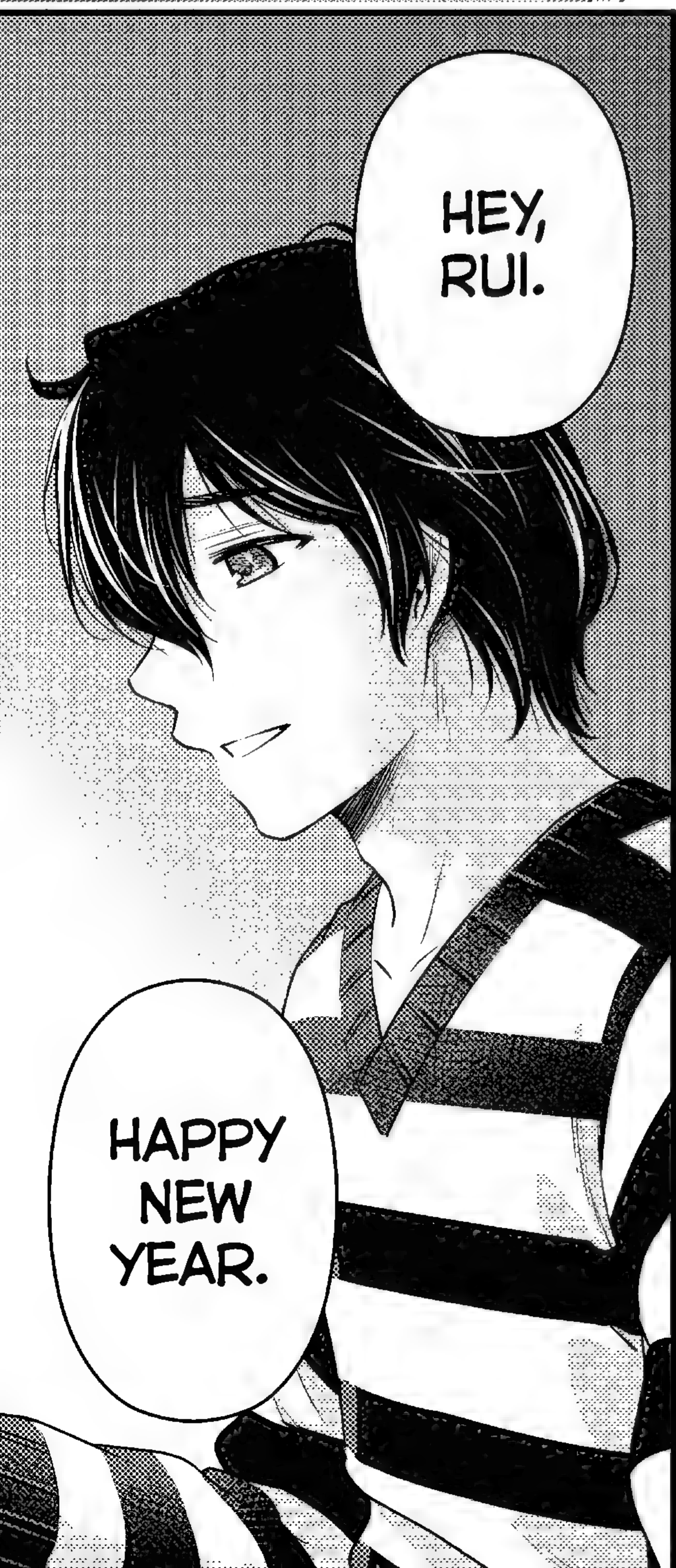
**...AND KEPT
EVERYTHING
BOTTLED UP.**



I DIDN'T
KNOW
WHAT TO
DO WITH
MYSELF.

I FELT SO
LONELY
AND
HELPLESS.







YEAH.
CLASS
JUST
ENDED.

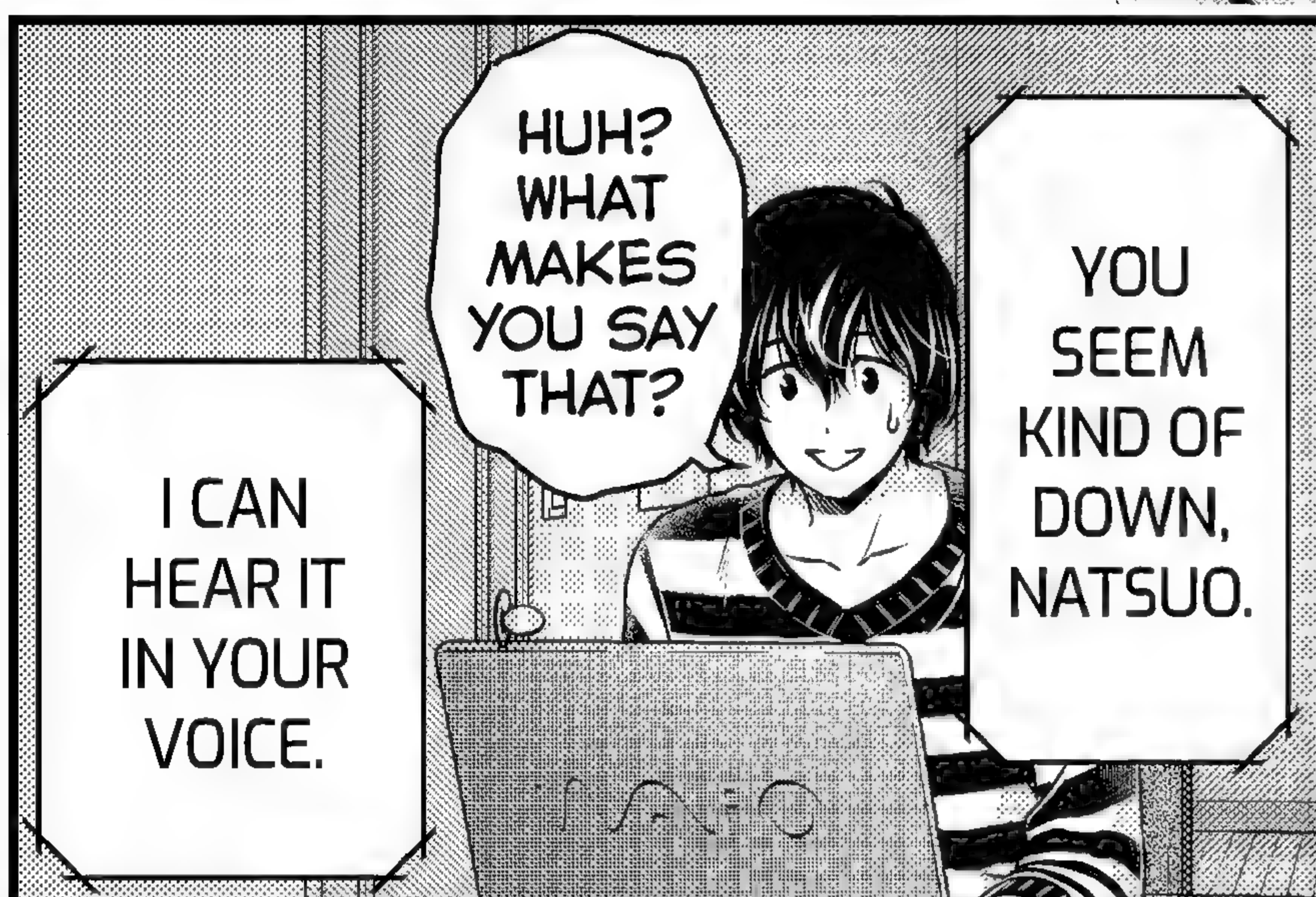
HUH?
ARE YOU
OUT-
SIDE?

WOW.
YOU HAVE
CLASS ON
NEW YEAR'S
DAY, TOO?



HAPPY
NEW YEAR,
NATSUO!

HERE'S TO
ANOTHER
GOOD
YEAR!



I CAN
HEAR IT
IN YOUR
VOICE.

HUH?
WHAT
MAKES
YOU SAY
THAT?

YOU
SEEM
KIND OF
DOWN,
NATSUO.



UH-HUH.
SO,
TODAY—

OH, YEAH?
DID SOME-
THING GOOD
HAPPEN?

I
COULDN'T
WAIT UNTIL
I GOT
BACK TO
THE HOTEL.



HE SAID
I HAVE
TALENT!

REALLY?
THAT'S
GREAT!

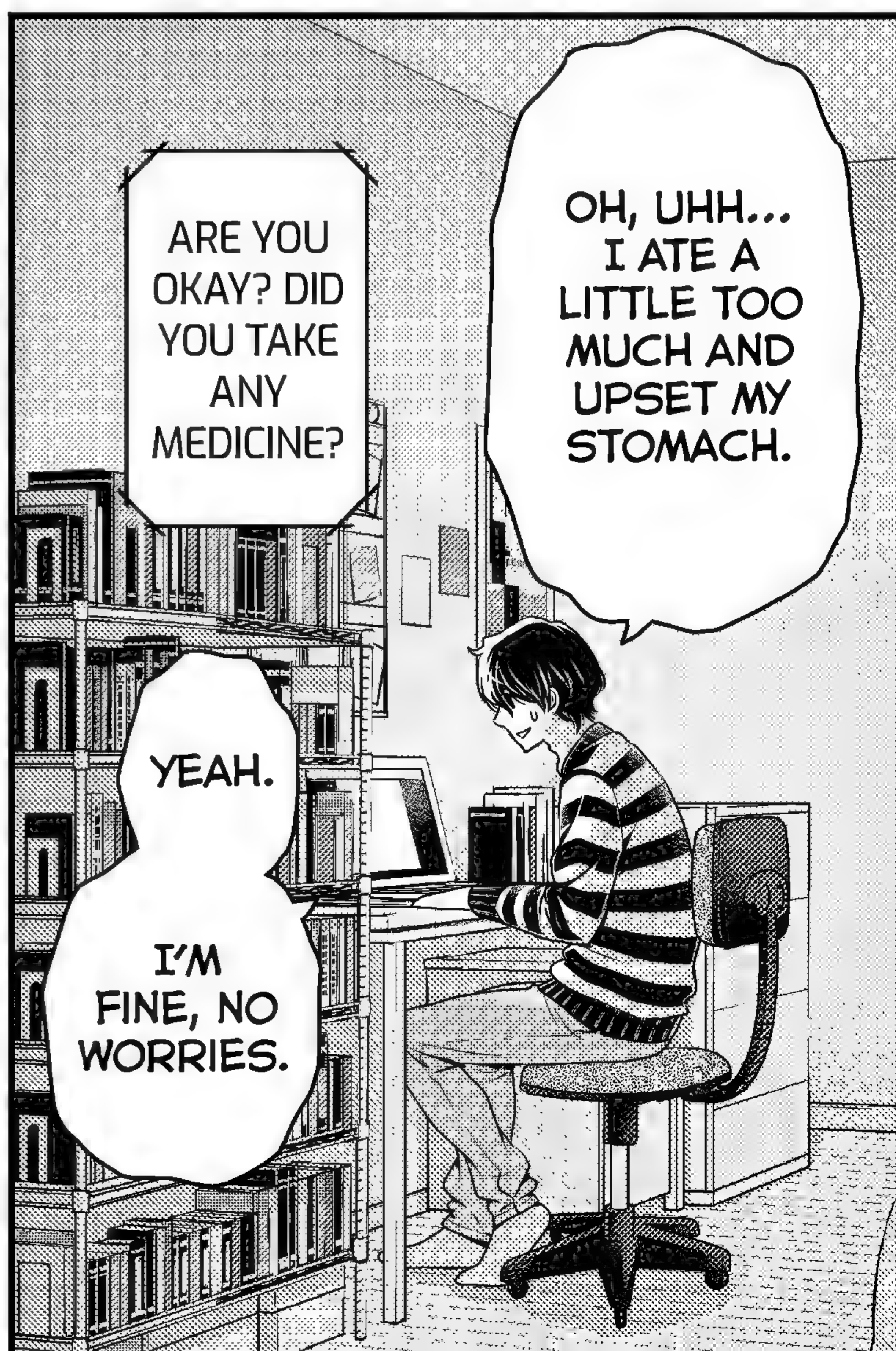
I WAS
A LITTLE
WORRIED,
SINCE I'M THE
BIGGEST
NOVICE HERE,
BUT THAT
GAVE MY
CONFIDENCE
A BOOST.



YOU
WERE
SAY-
ING?

HEE-
HEE.

A FAMOUS
CHEF COM-
PLIMENTED
ME IN CLASS
TODAY!



ARE YOU
OKAY? DID
YOU TAKE
ANY
MEDICINE?

YEAH.

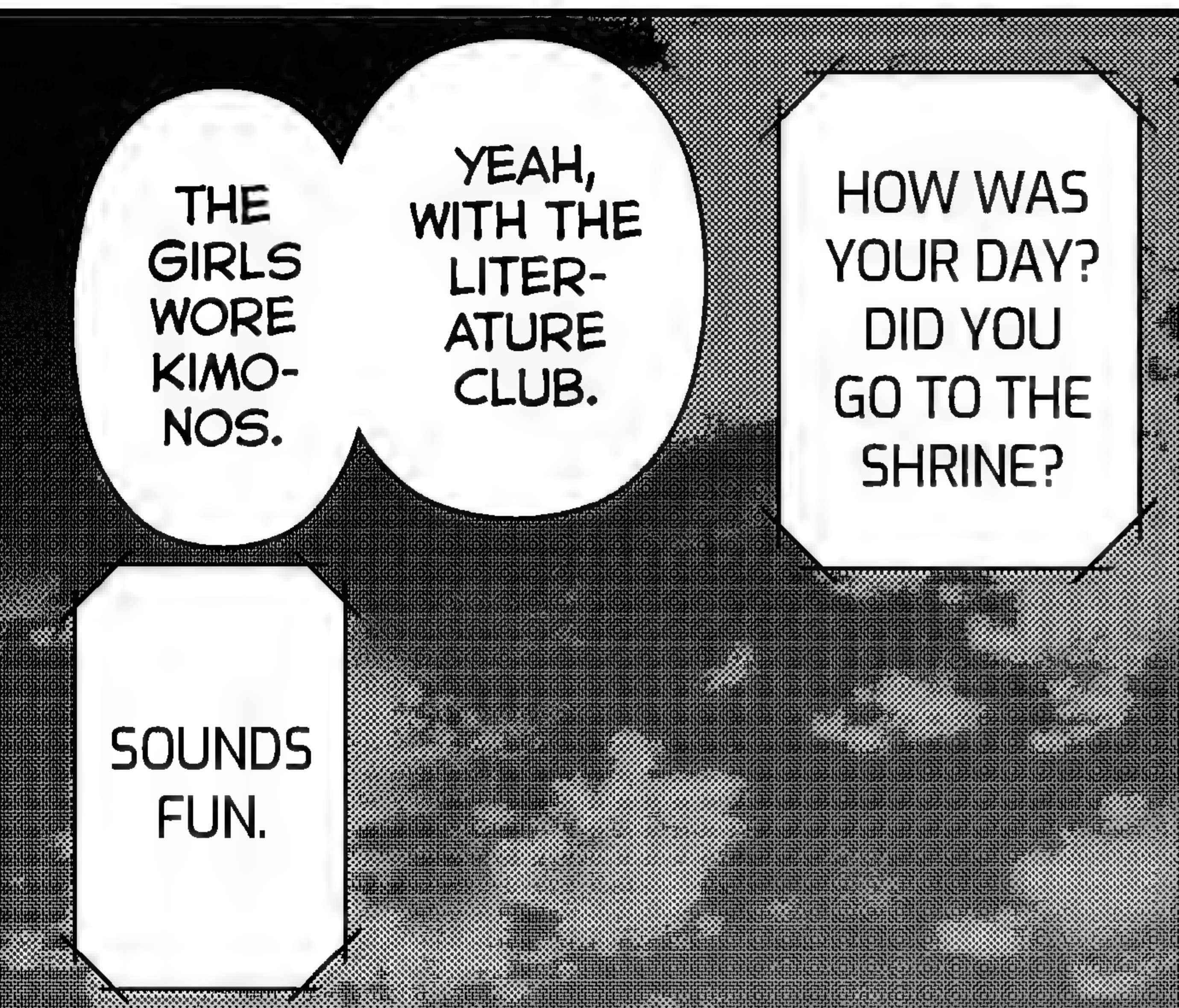
I'M
FINE, NO
WORRIES.

OH, UHH...
I ATE A
LITTLE TOO
MUCH AND
UPSET MY
STOMACH.



MAYBE
COOKING'S
UP MY
ALLEY,
AFTER
ALL.

I'LL HAVE TO
WORK HARD TO
CATCH UP TO
EVERYONE.

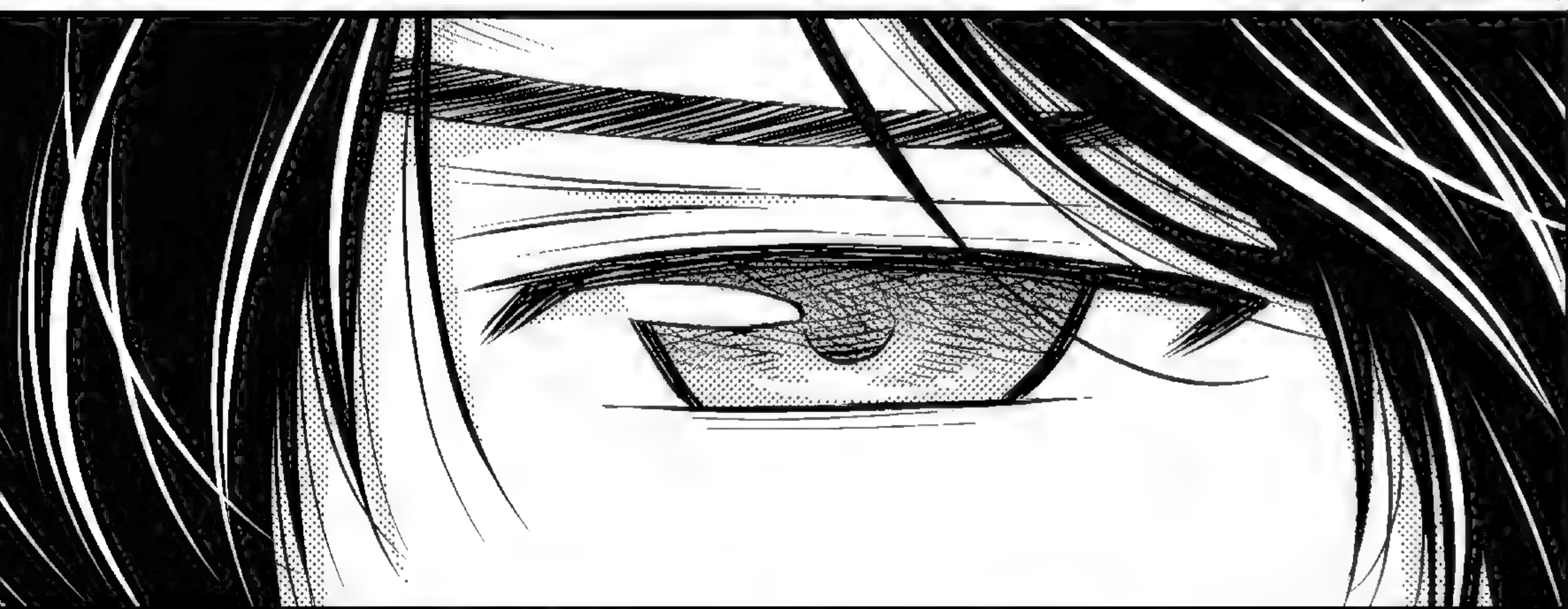


THE
GIRLS
WORE
KIMO-
NOS.

YEAH,
WITH THE
LITER-
ATURE
CLUB.

HOW WAS
YOUR DAY?
DID YOU
GO TO THE
SHRINE?

SOUNDS
FUN.



HOW CAN I BE
THE ONLY ONE...

...WHO WALKS
OUT HAPPY?

CHARM: ACADEMICS

GOOD
MORN-
ING.

MOHIN
...

NOT
REALLY.

JUST A
LITTLE
HEAD-
ACHE.

DO YOU
HAVE A
HANG-
OVER?

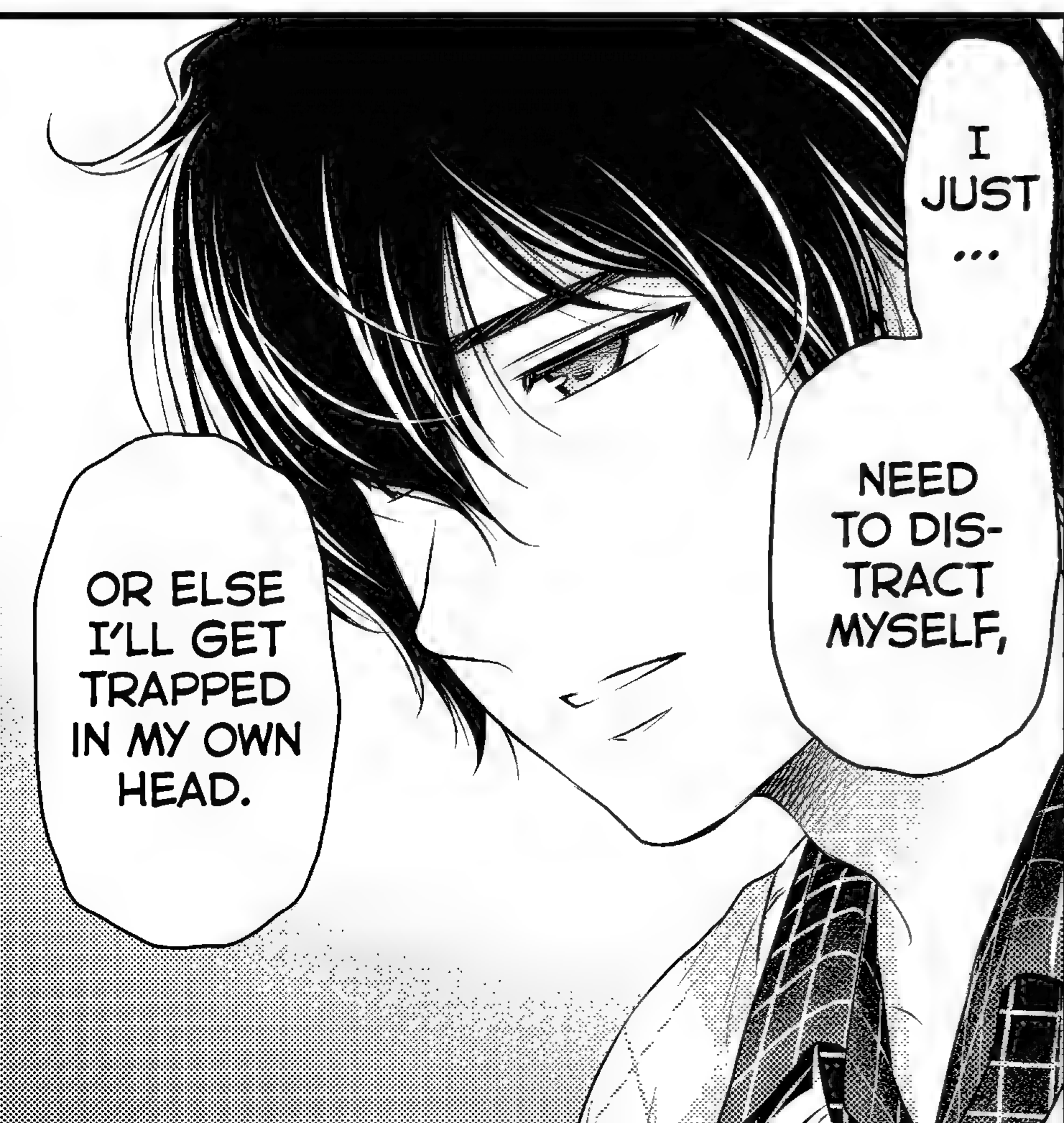
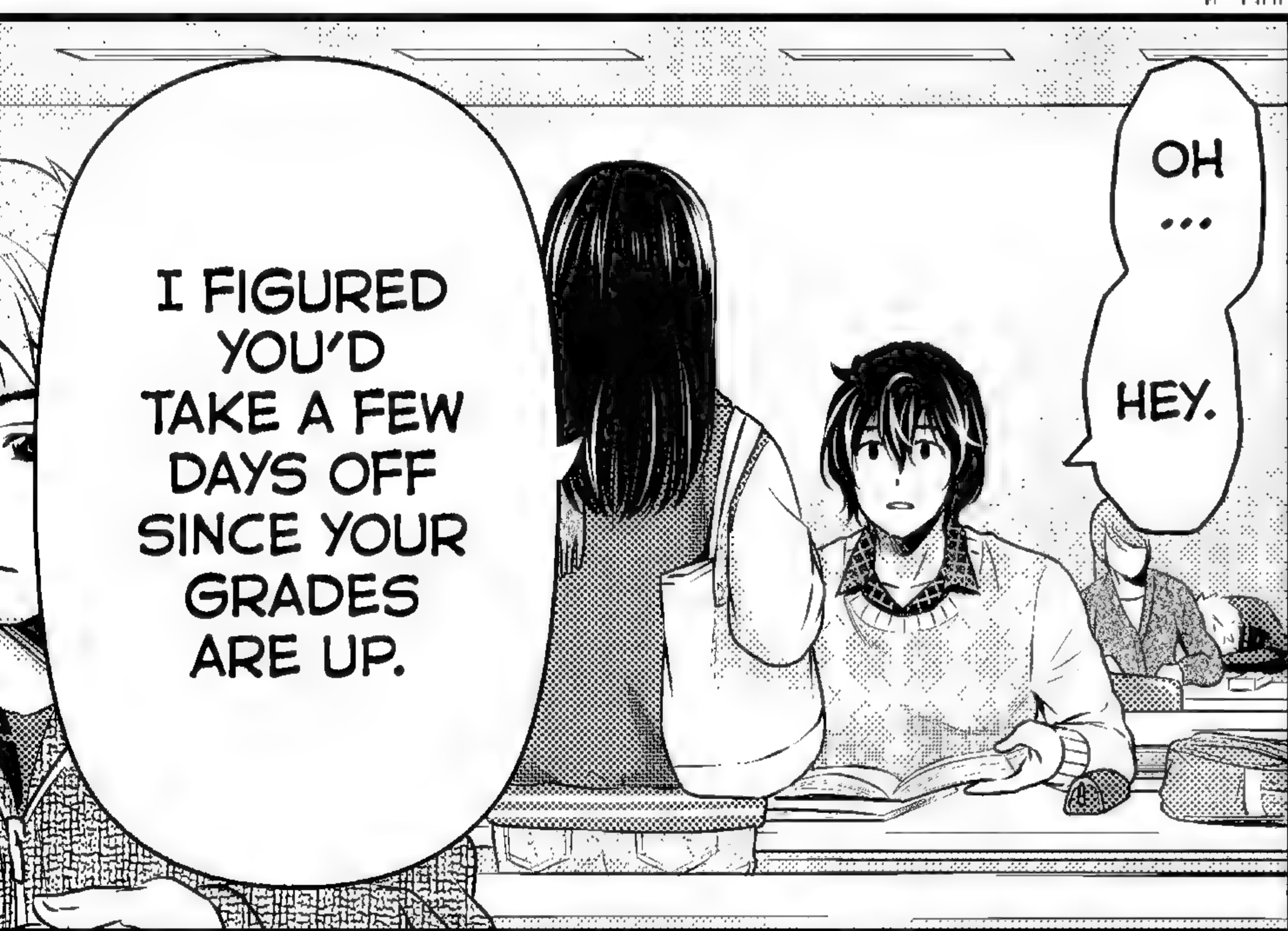
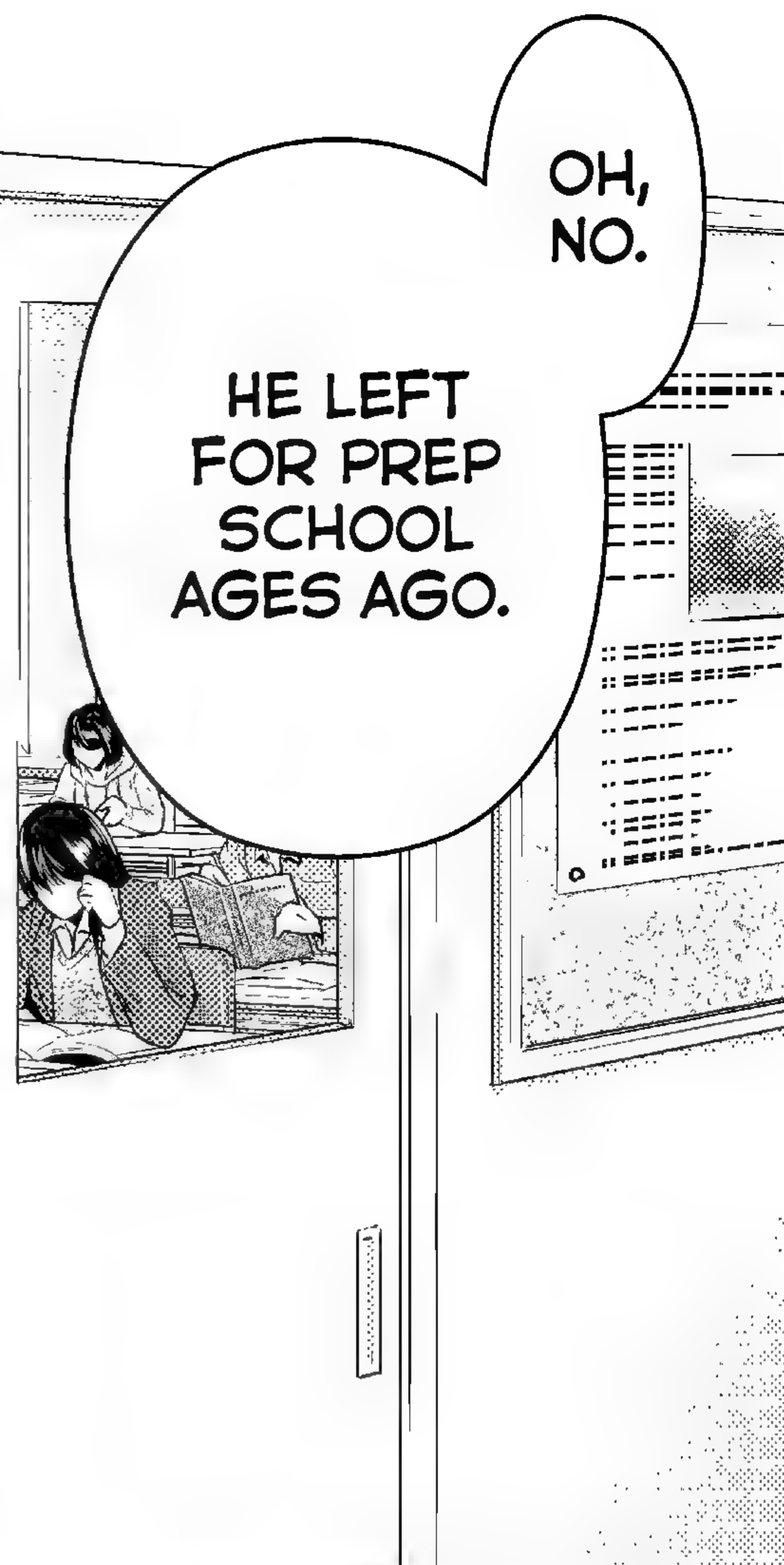
HOW
DO
YOU
FEEL
?

IS
NATSUO-
KUN
STILL
ASLEEP?

HM?

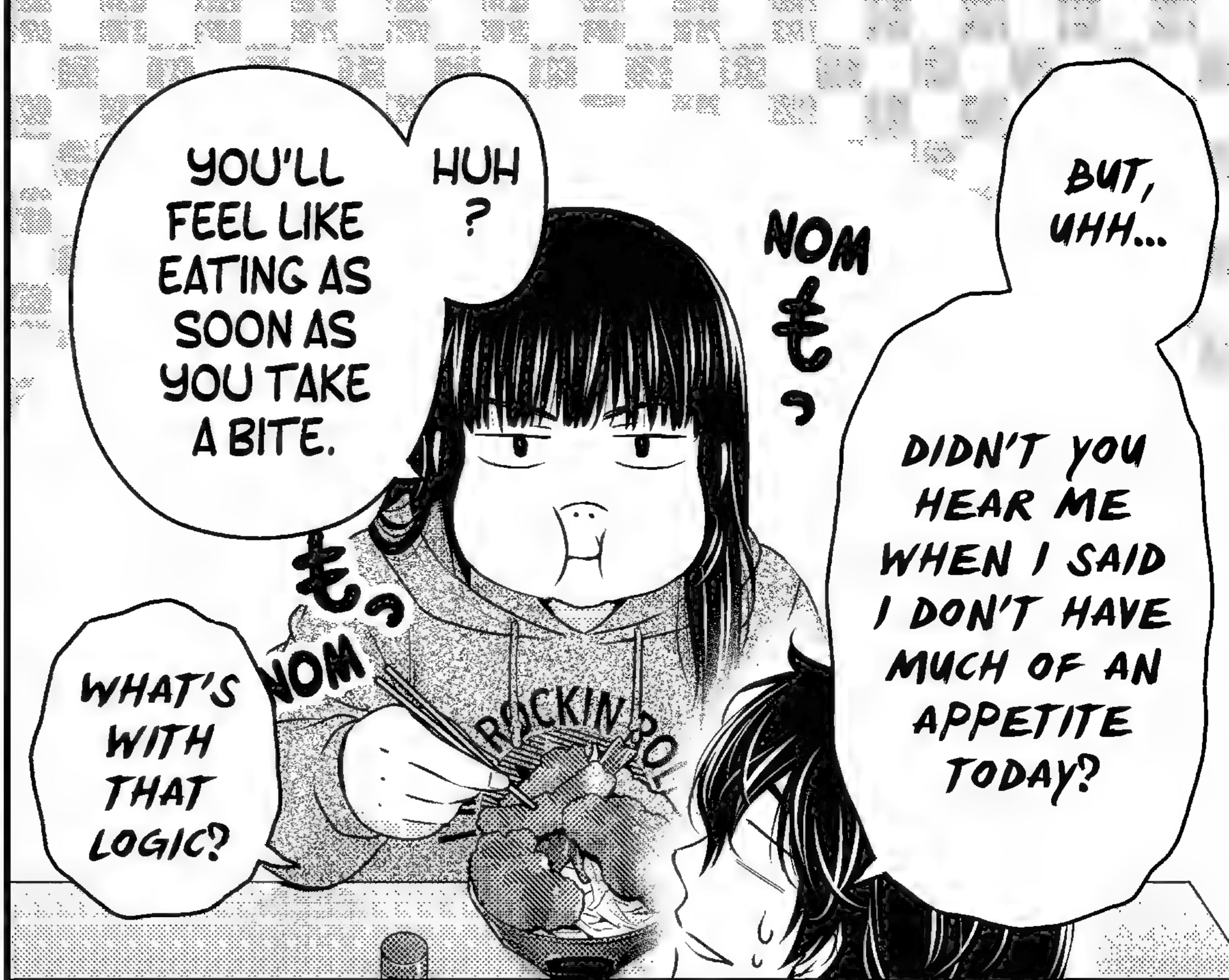
MMM...
I'LL JUST
HAVE
COFFEE.

DO YOU
WANT
BREAK-
FAST?





IT'S BEST
TO EAT
SOMETHING
GOOD WHEN
YOU'RE
FEELING
DOWN.



YOU'LL
FEEL LIKE
EATING AS
SOON AS
YOU TAKE
A BITE.

HUH
?

NOM
もっ

BUT,
UHH...

DIDN'T YOU
HEAR ME
WHEN I SAID
I DON'T HAVE
MUCH OF AN
APPETITE
TODAY?

WHAT'S
WITH
THAT
LOGIC?



BUT WHAT
HAPPENED
?

YOU
DON'T HAVE
TO TALK
ABOUT IT IF
YOU DON'T
WANT TO,



...
YOU'RE
REALLY
NICE, YOU
KNOW
THAT?



WHAT
WOULD
YOU DO IF
SOMEONE
YOU CARED
ABOUT...

WHAT
...

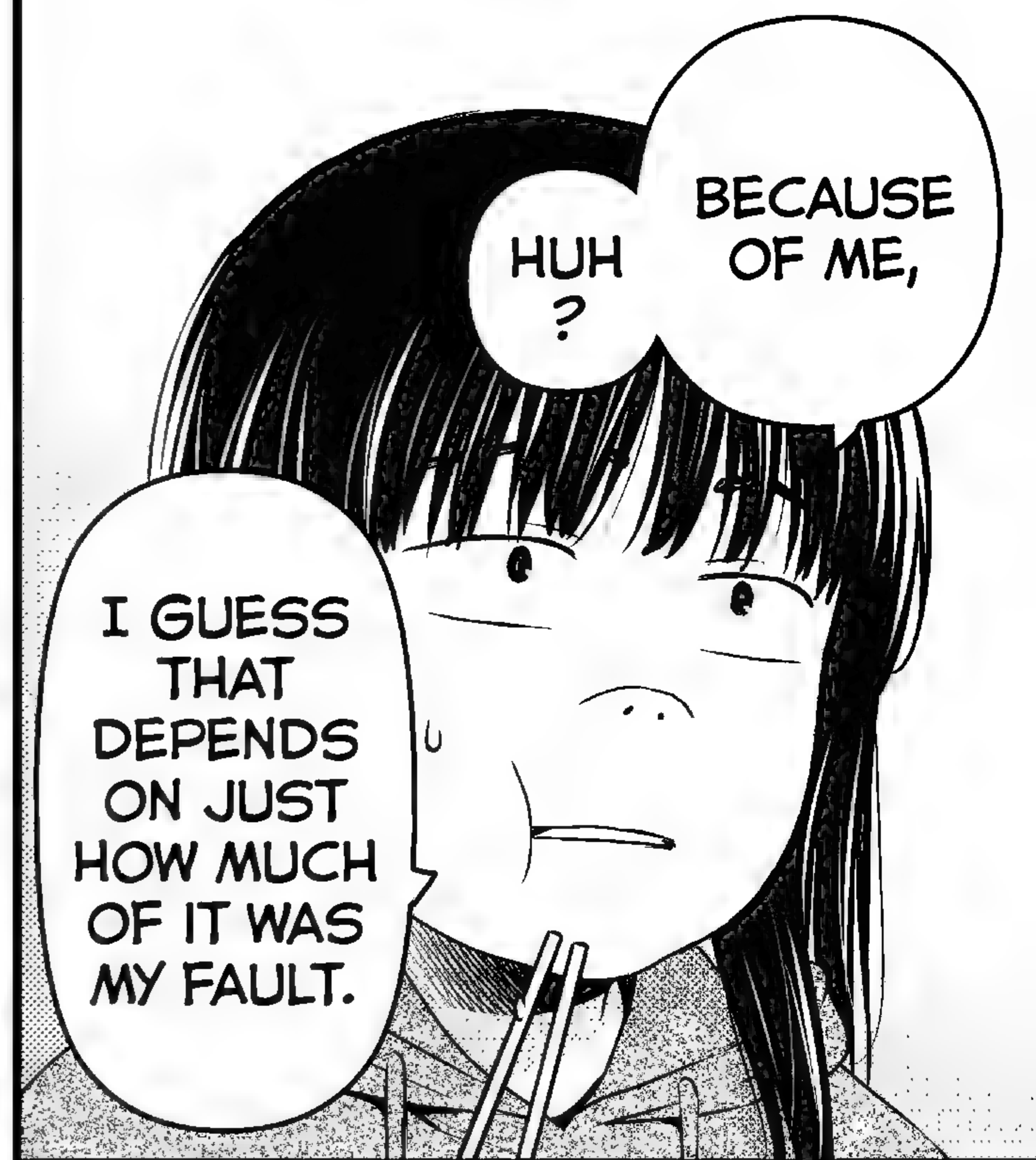
...GAVE
UP ON
THEIR
DREAMS
BECAUSE
OF YOU?





BUT SHE'LL BE FORCED BACK INTO A PAINFUL SITUATION IF I STOP HER!

AT ANY RATE, I'D TRY TO STOP THEM.



HUH?

BECAUSE OF ME,

I GUESS THAT DEPENDS ON JUST HOW MUCH OF IT WAS MY FAULT.



PROBABLY?

PROBABLY ...

ARE YOU EVEN SURE IT'S REALLY YOUR FAULT?

NO, DEFINITELY.



S-SORRY ...



THAT IS, UNTIL YOU SNAPPED AT HIM FOR ME.

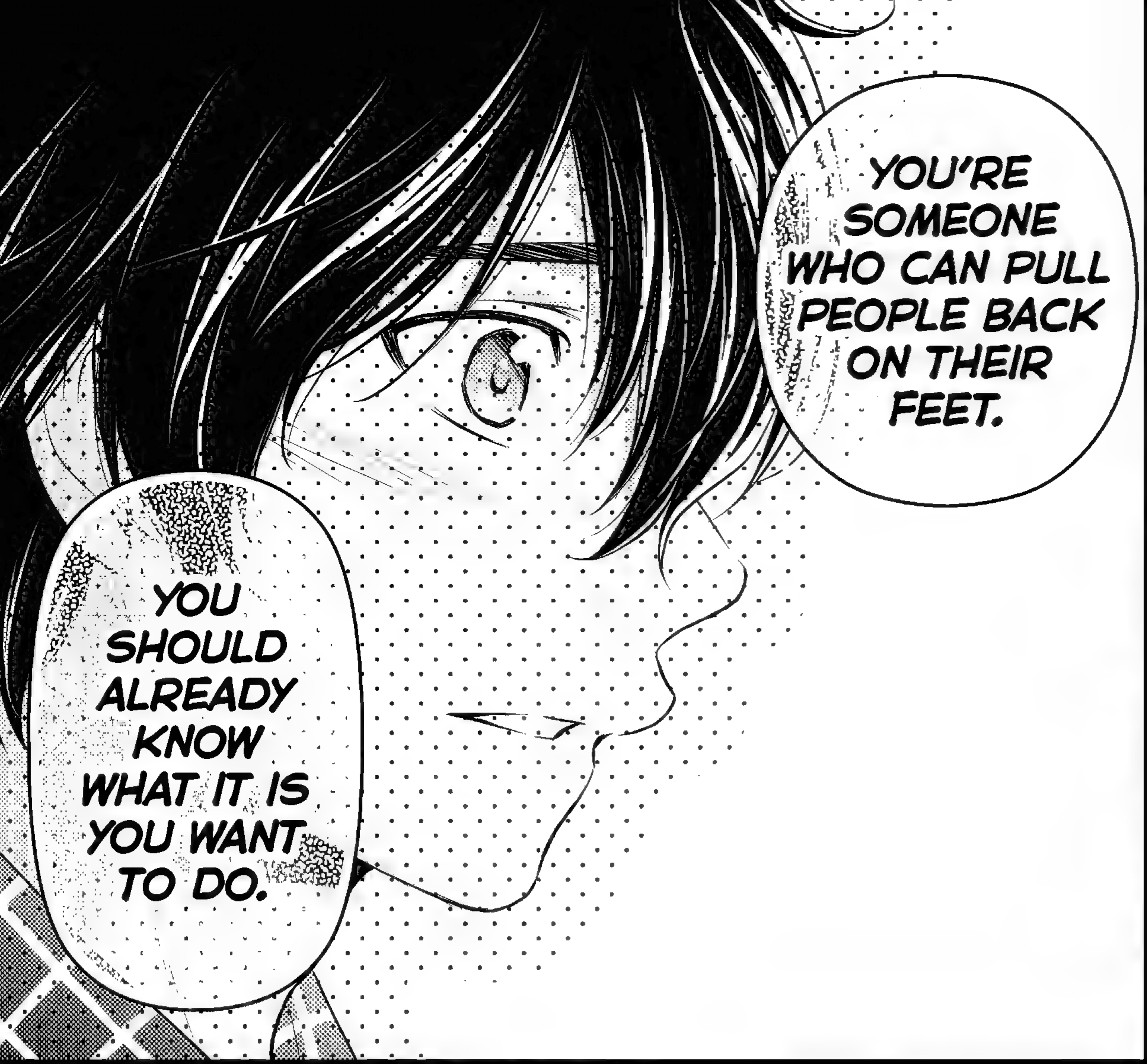
I LET BITTERNESS EAT AWAY AT ME FOR YEARS BECAUSE I COULDN'T SAY ANYTHING BACK WHEN I HEARD HIM BADMOUTH ME.

IN THE END, HARD FEELINGS DON'T GO AWAY UNTIL YOU GET EVERYTHING OFF YOUR CHEST AND HEAR WHAT THE OTHER PERSON HAS TO SAY.



LISTEN ...

DID YOU FORGET ABOUT WHAT HAPPENED BETWEEN ME AND GENTA?



YOU'RE
SOMEONE
WHO CAN PULL
PEOPLE BACK
ON THEIR
FEET.

YOU
SHOULD
ALREADY
KNOW
WHAT IT IS
YOU WANT
TO DO.



YOU DON'T
WANT TO
SUFFER
FOR YEARS
LIKE I DID,
DO YOU?



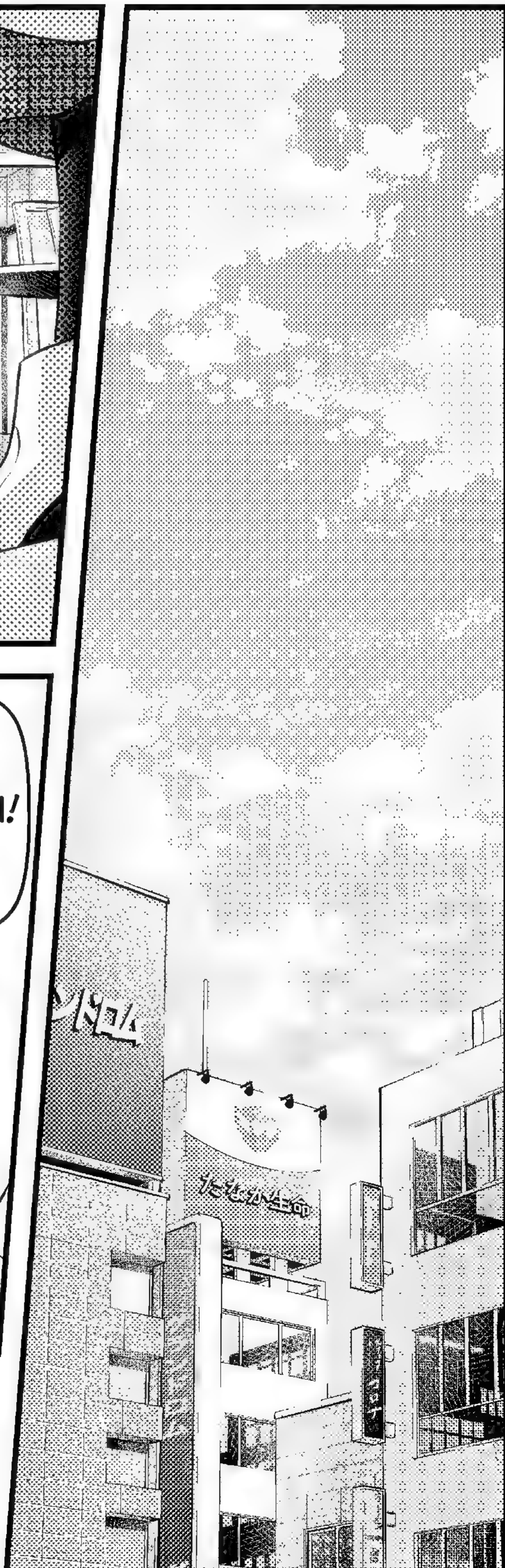
SORRY
I'M LATE!

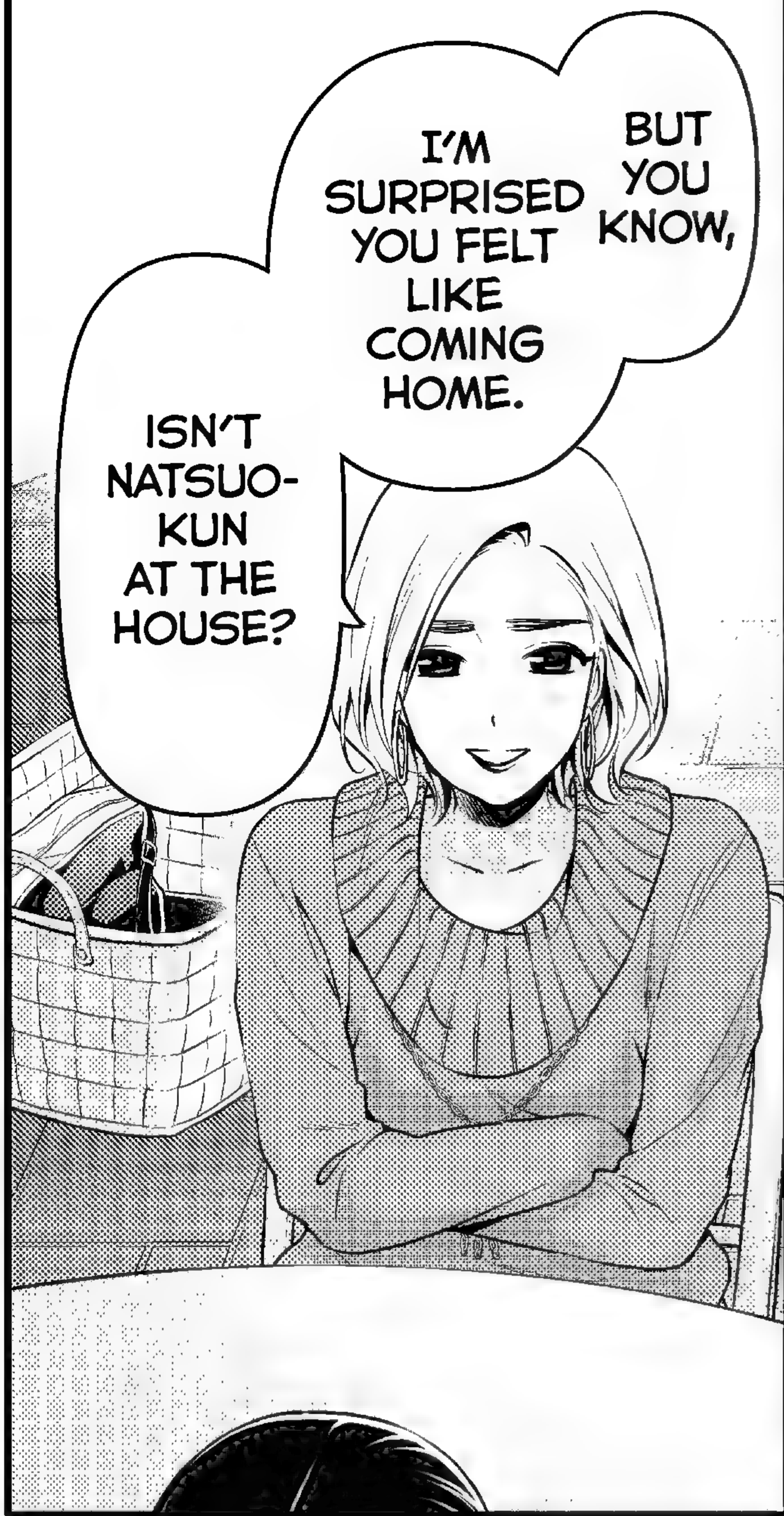
I ALWAYS
LAZE AROUND
THE HOUSE
WHENEVER
I HAVE A
DAY OFF.



MAKI!

OVER
HERE!





ISN'T NATSUO-KUN AT THE HOUSE?

I'M SURPRISED YOU FELT LIKE COMING HOME.

BUT YOU KNOW,



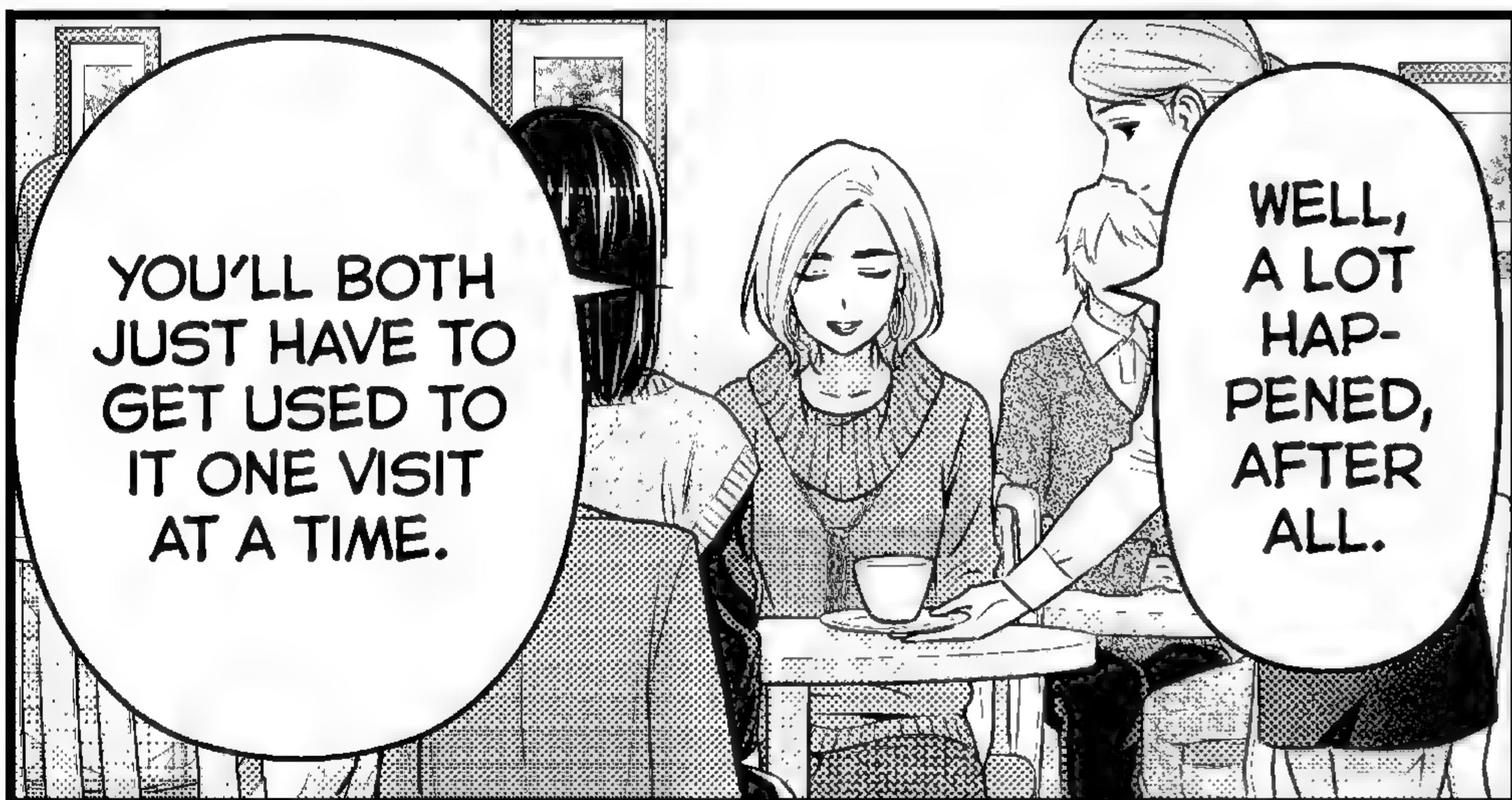
I WANTED TO SEE YOU, TOO.

I WAS SO GLAD YOU CALLED.

I KNOW HOW THAT IS.

OH!

EXCUSE ME. ONE CAFÉ MOCHA, PLEASE.



YOU'LL BOTH JUST HAVE TO GET USED TO IT ONE VISIT AT A TIME.

WELL, A LOT HAPPENED, AFTER ALL.



...PRETTY TAKEN ABACK WHEN HE SAW ME.

YEAH.

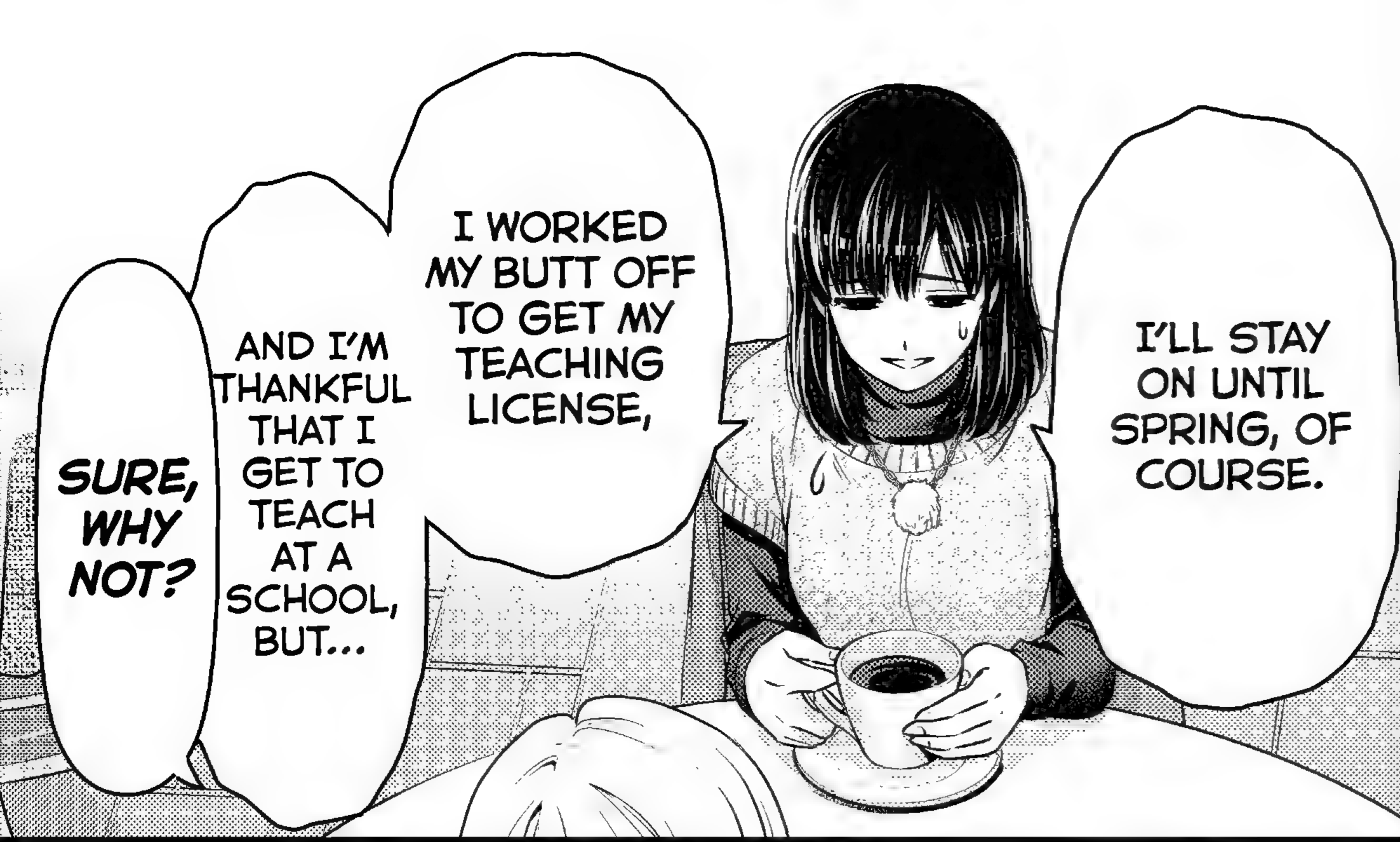
HE LOOKED ...

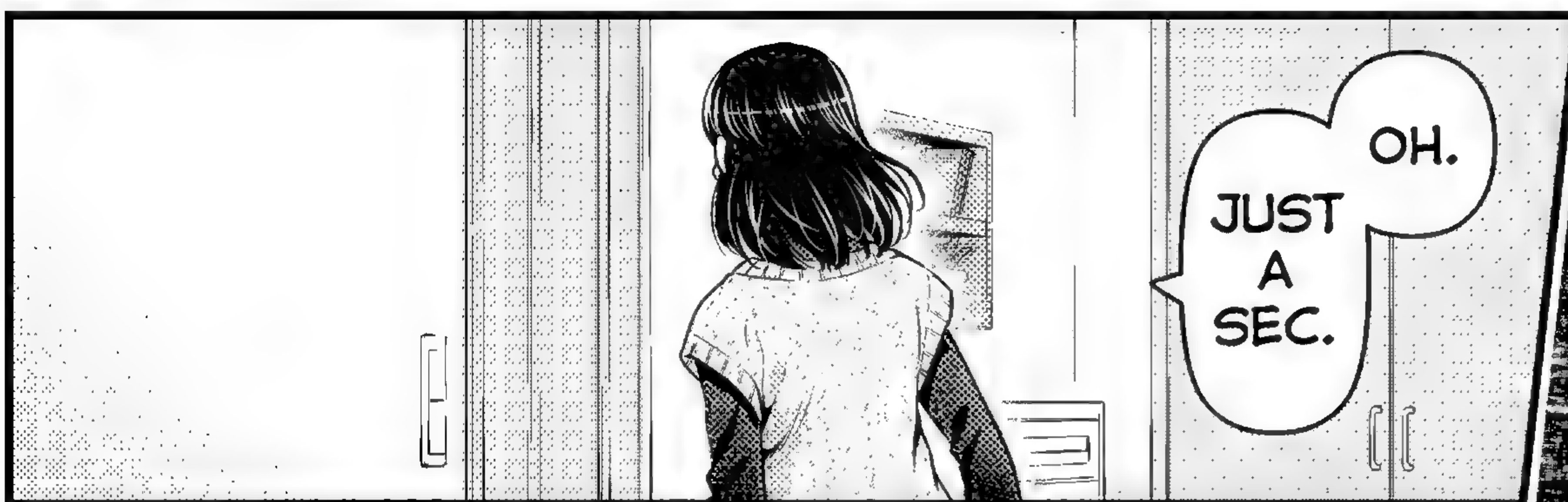
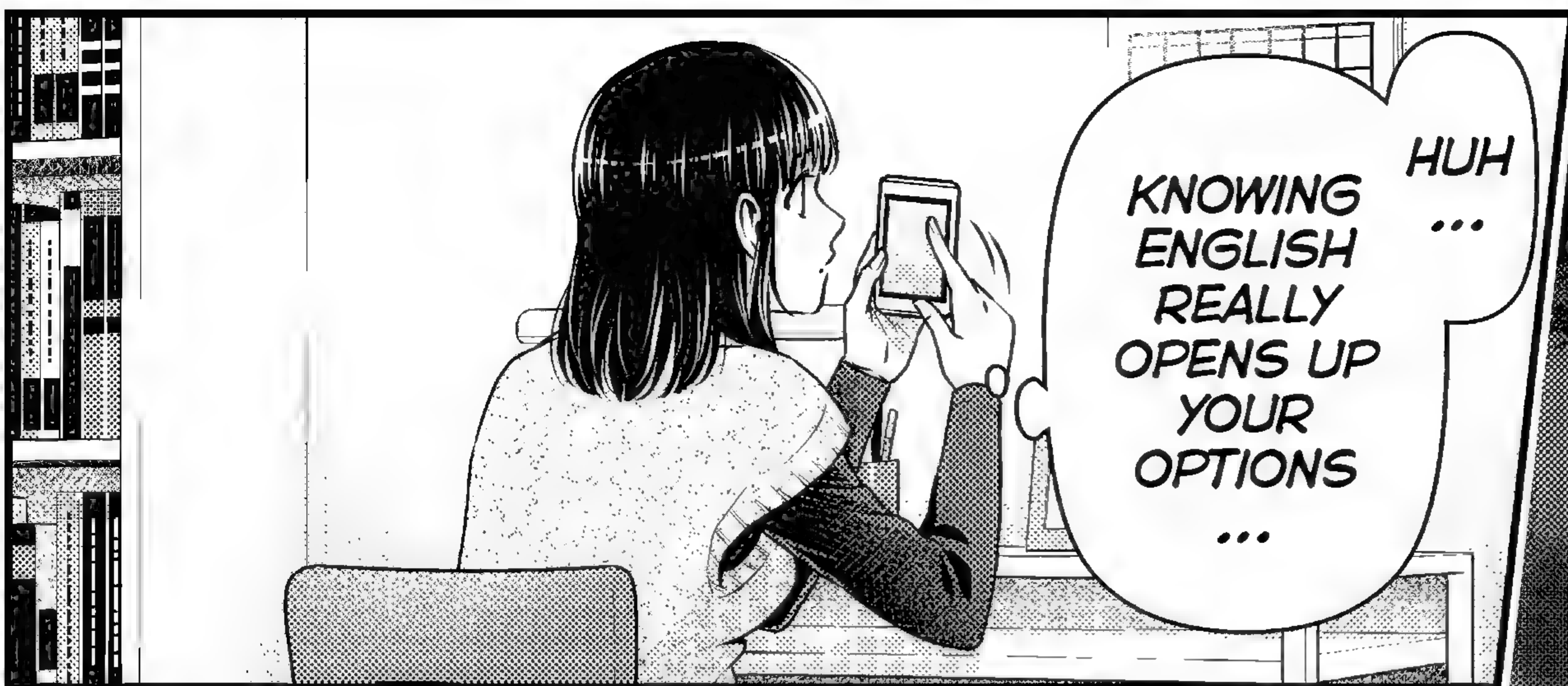
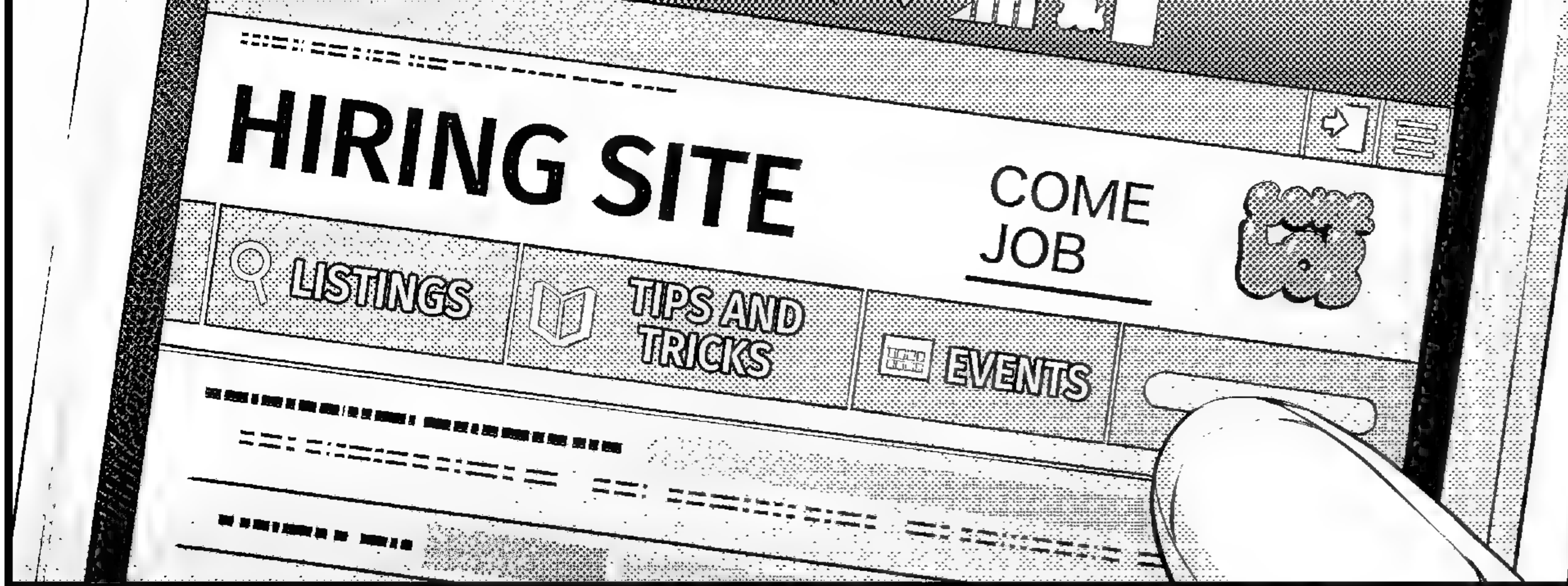


...THINKING ABOUT GETTING OUT OF TEACHING.

I'M...

ACTUALLY,

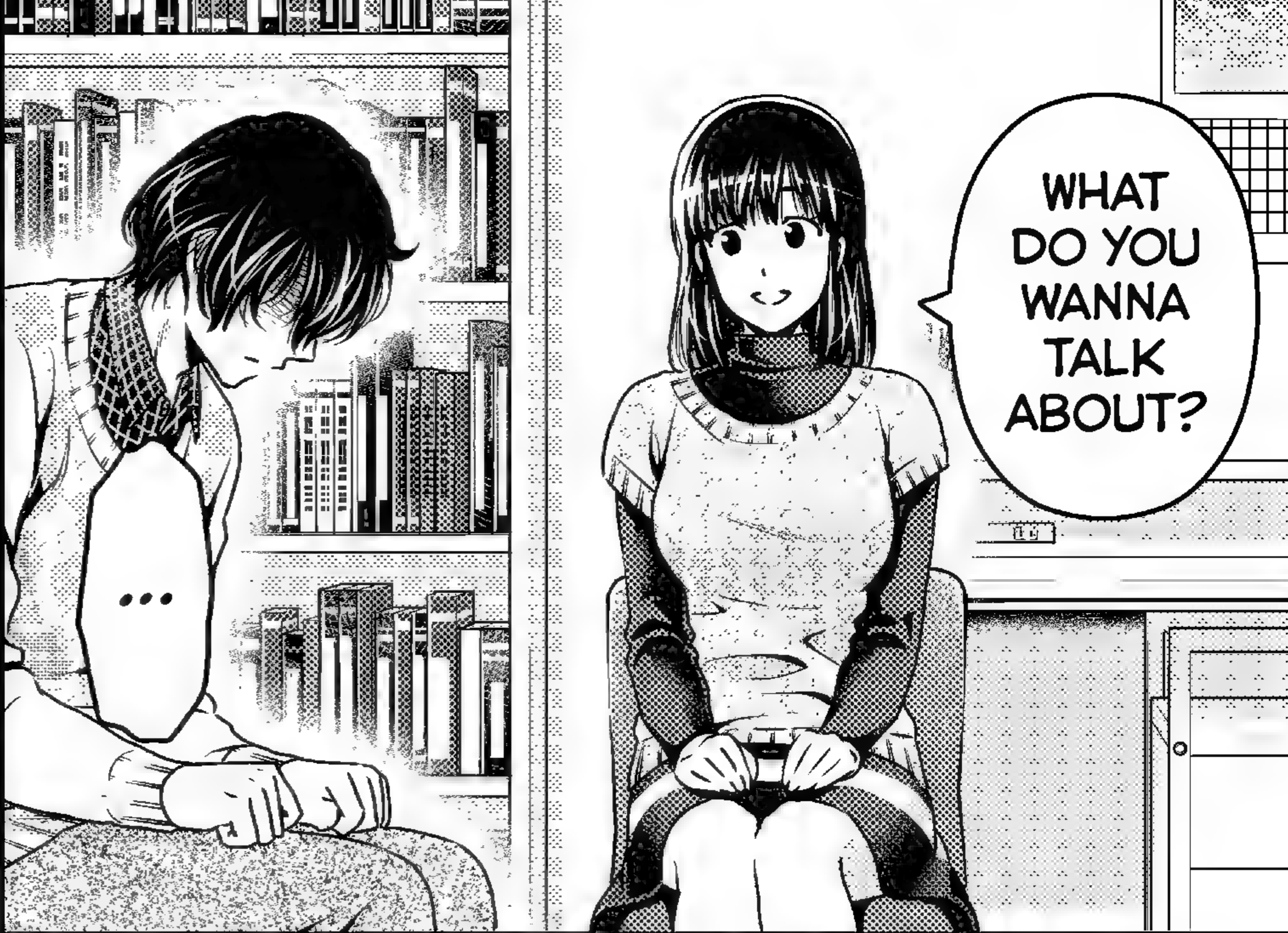




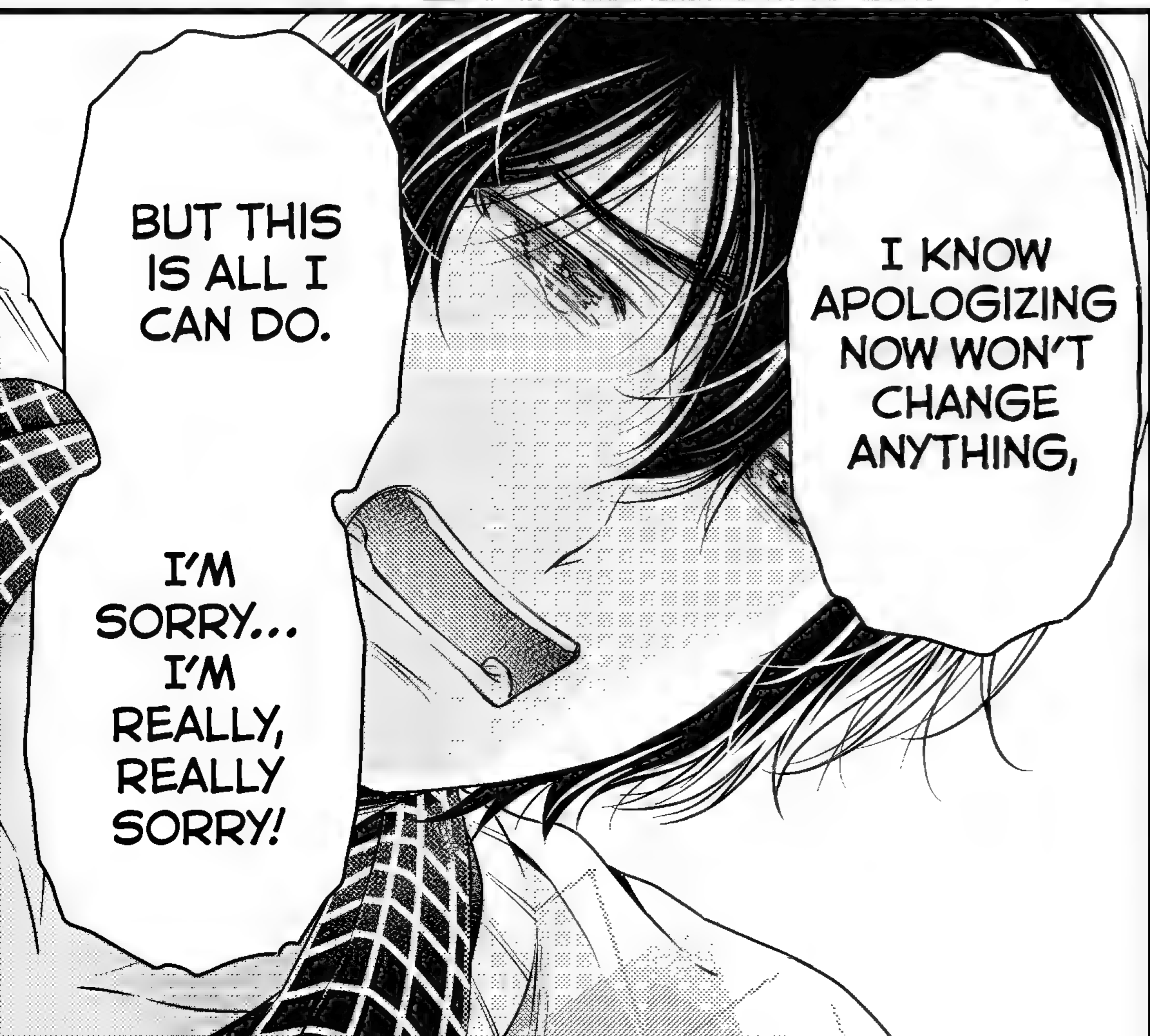


LAST NIGHT,
I OVERHEARD
YOU SAY...

YOU
WANT
TO QUIT
TEACH-
ING.



WHAT
DO YOU
WANNA
TALK
ABOUT?



I KNOW
APOLOGIZING
NOW WON'T
CHANGE
ANYTHING,





WHA
...



ATONE?

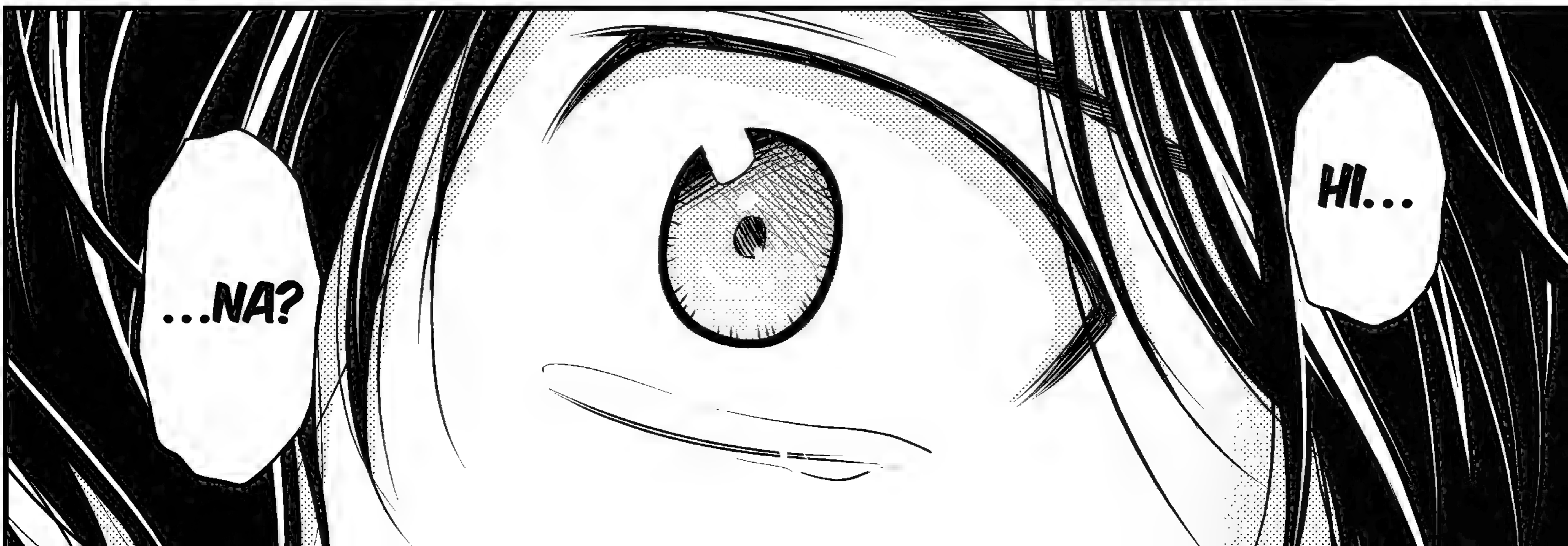
DON'T
SAY THAT
...



IF THERE'S
ANYTHING
I CAN DO,
JUST SAY
THE WORD!

I KNOW I
CAN NEVER
ATONE
FOR WHAT
I'VE DONE,
BUT...

YOU GAVE
UP ON YOUR
DREAM JOB
BECAUSE
OF ME...



...NA?

HI...



CHAPTER 133: THE MEANING BEHIND THE EMBRACE



...AFTER
WHAT I
SAID ON
OSHIMA.

JUST
HOW
STUPID
I'D
BEEN.

IT
FINALLY
HIT ME
...

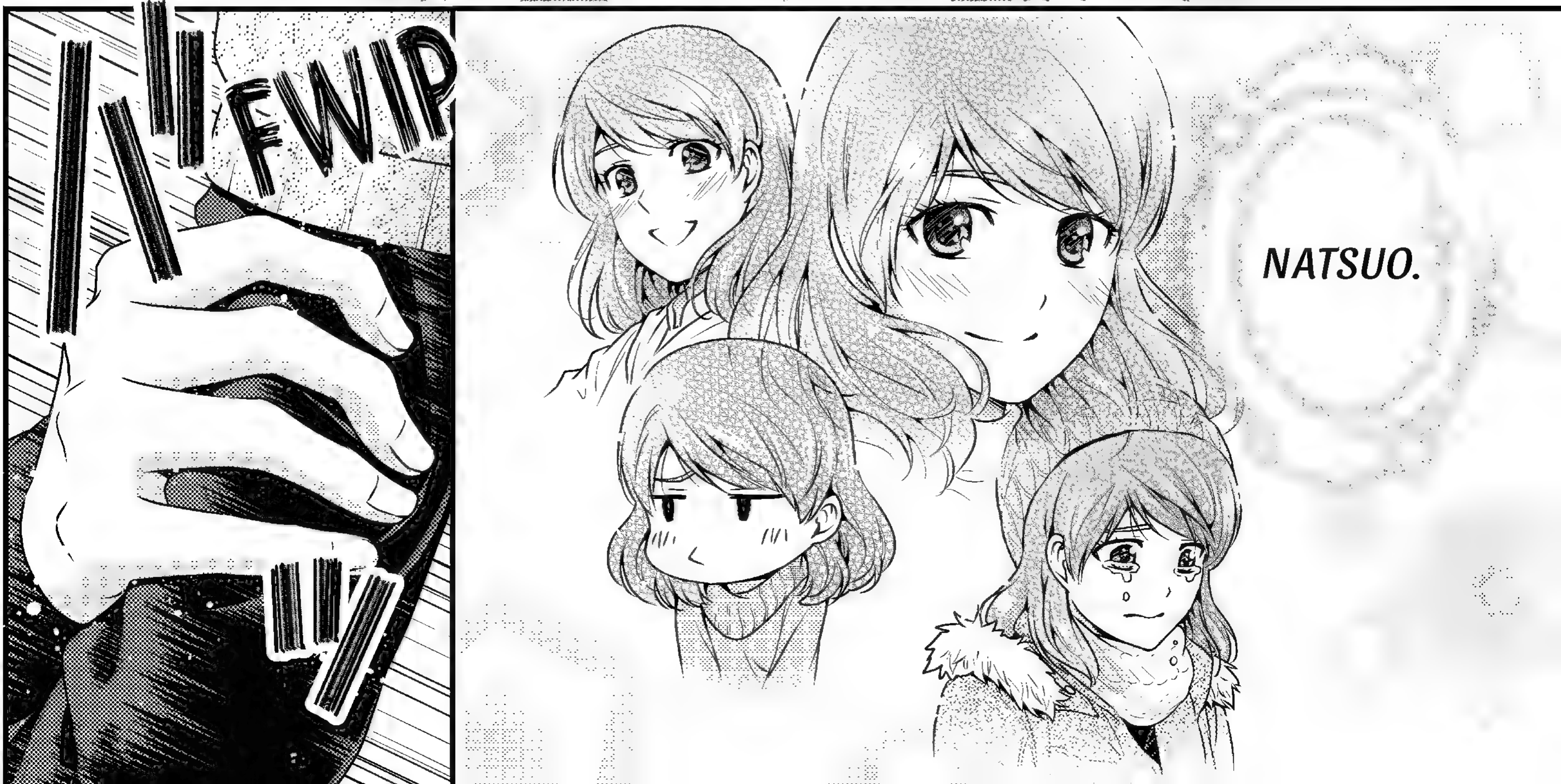
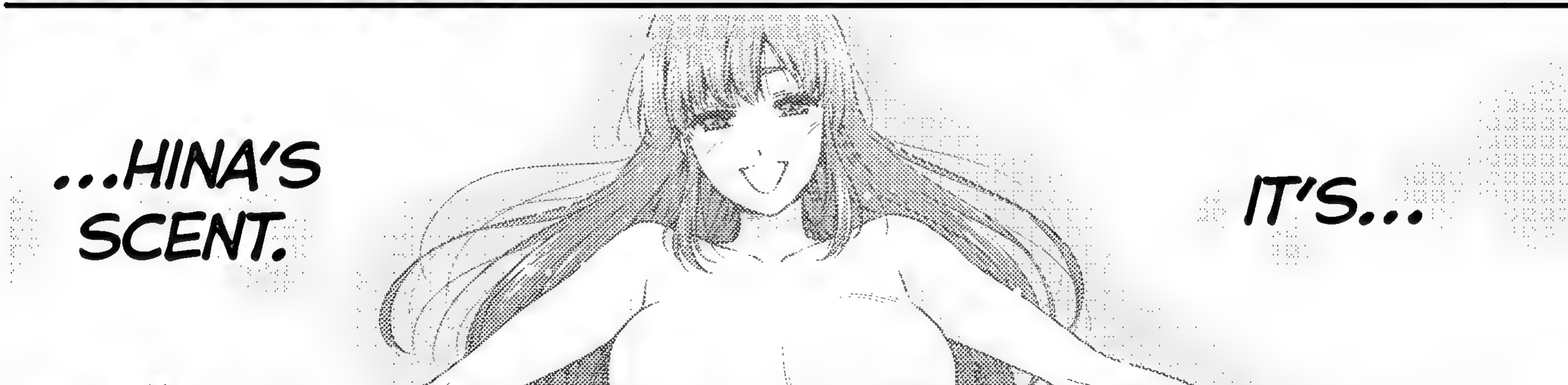
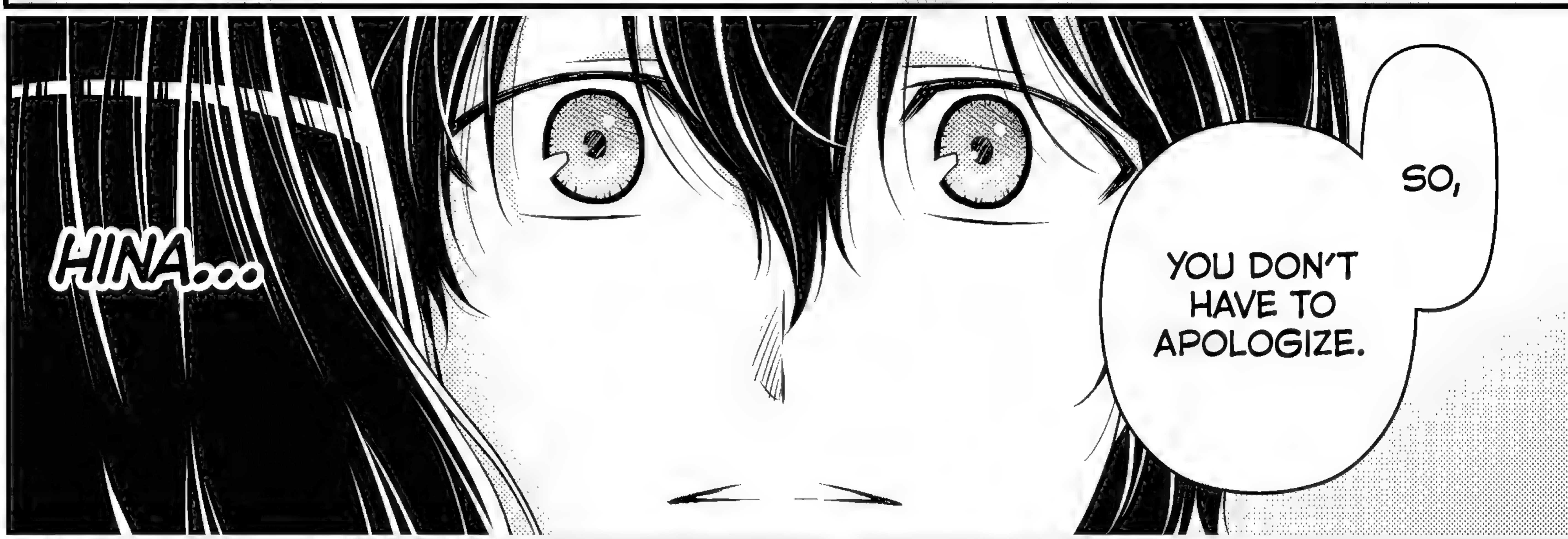
I'M SORRY.
IT'S NO
WONDER
YOU'VE BEEN
BLAMING
YOURSELF...



THE
TRUTH
IS,
I DON'T
REGRET
ANYTHING.



THAT'S
NOT HOW
IT IS.







I WAS
JUST TOO
WEAK...

AND
GOT
STUCK.

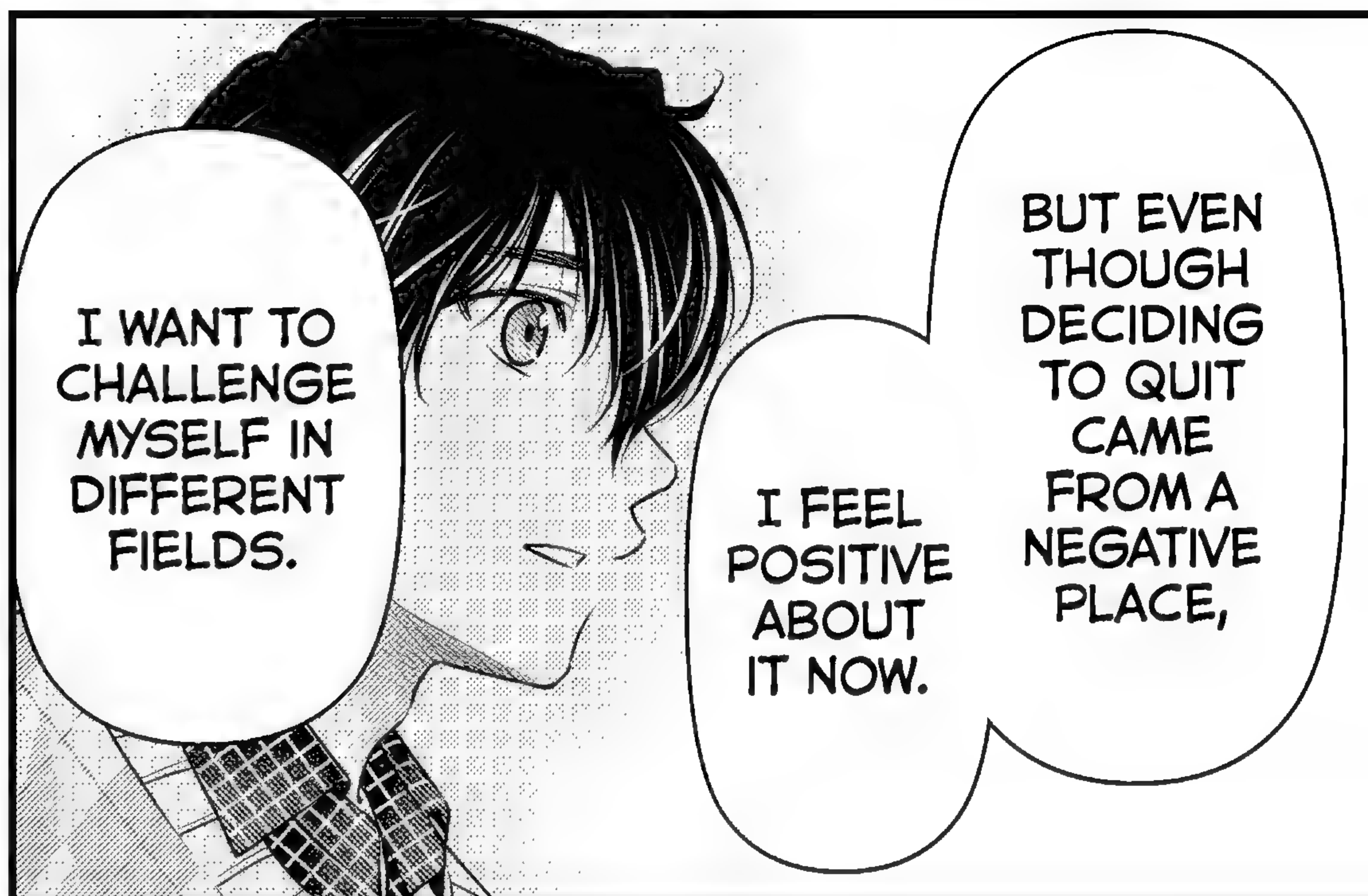
QUITTING
MY JOB IS
ENTIRELY
ON ME.



OKAY
?

SO,
DON'T FEEL
RESPONSIBLE
FOR
ANYTHING!

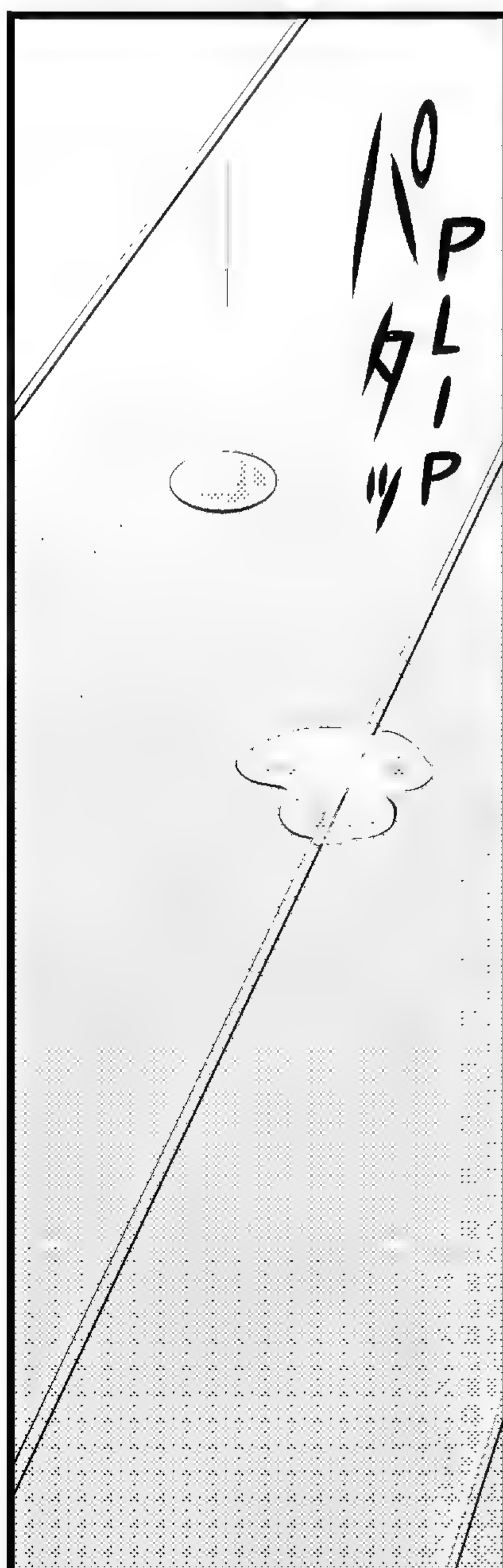
UH...
SURE...



I WANT TO
CHALLENGE
MYSELF IN
DIFFERENT
FIELDS.

I FEEL
POSITIVE
ABOUT
IT NOW.

BUT EVEN
THOUGH
DECIDING
TO QUIT
CAME
FROM A
NEGATIVE
PLACE,



ノ
P
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THUD
ノ
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...





NO,
I'M JUST
WALKING
AROUND
THE
MARKET.

OH
...
SORRY.
ARE YOU
BUSY?

I JUST
WANTED
TO HEAR
YOUR VOICE
ALL OF A
SUDDEN.



WHAT'S
UP?

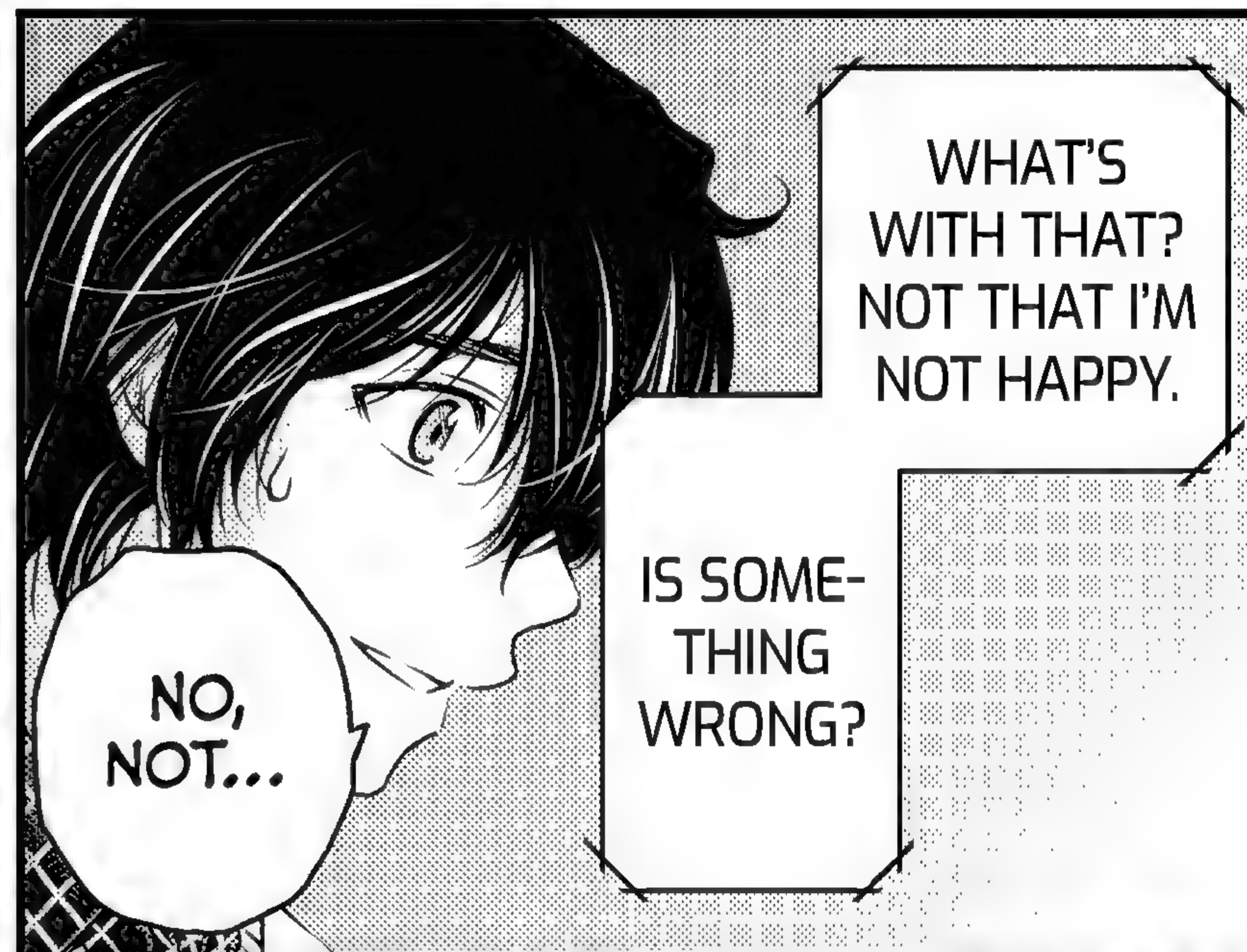
YOU DIDN'T
EVEN TEXT
ME FIRST.



RUI.



...



WHAT'S
WITH THAT?
NOT THAT I'M
NOT HAPPY.

IS SOME-
THING
WRONG?

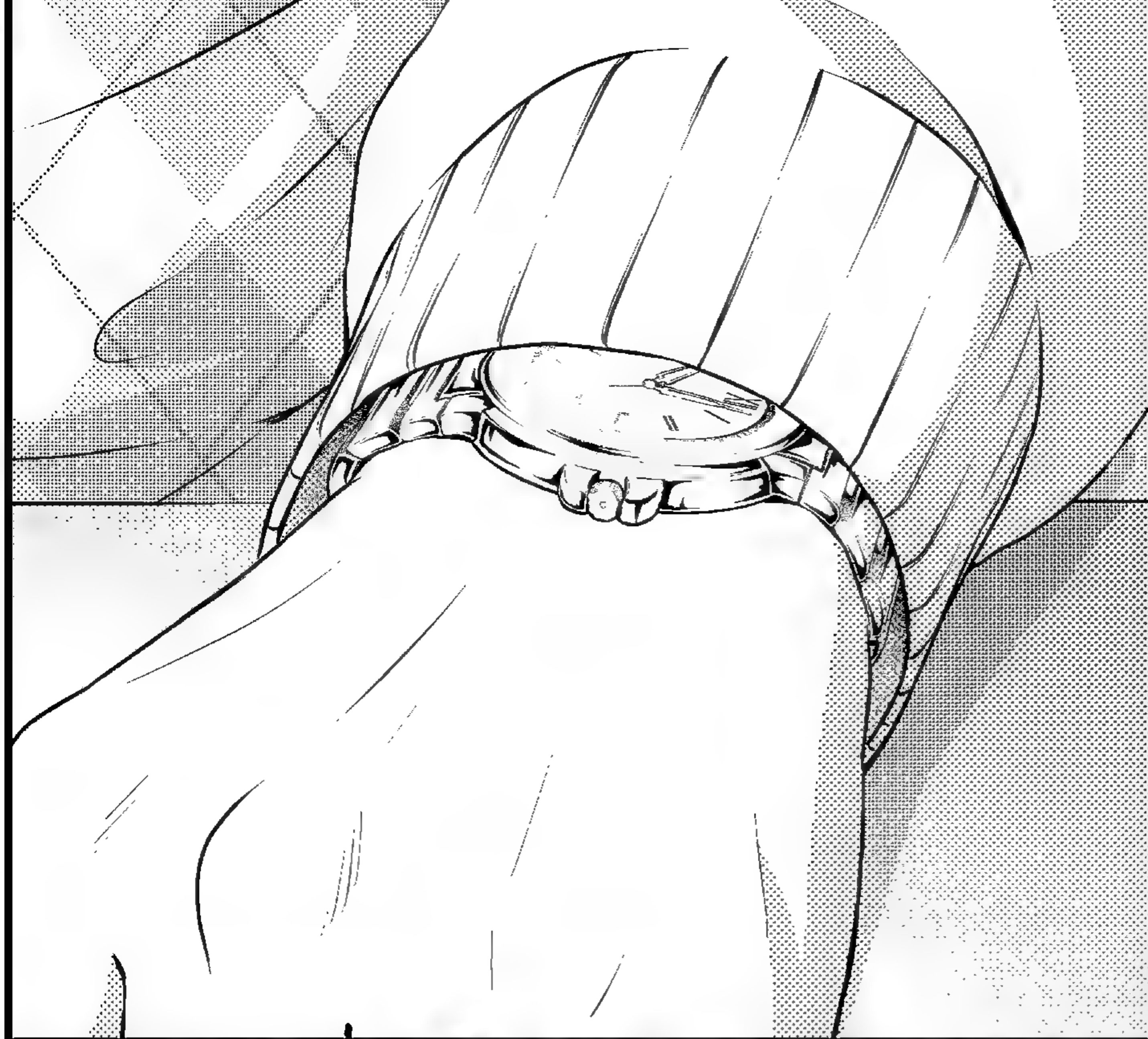
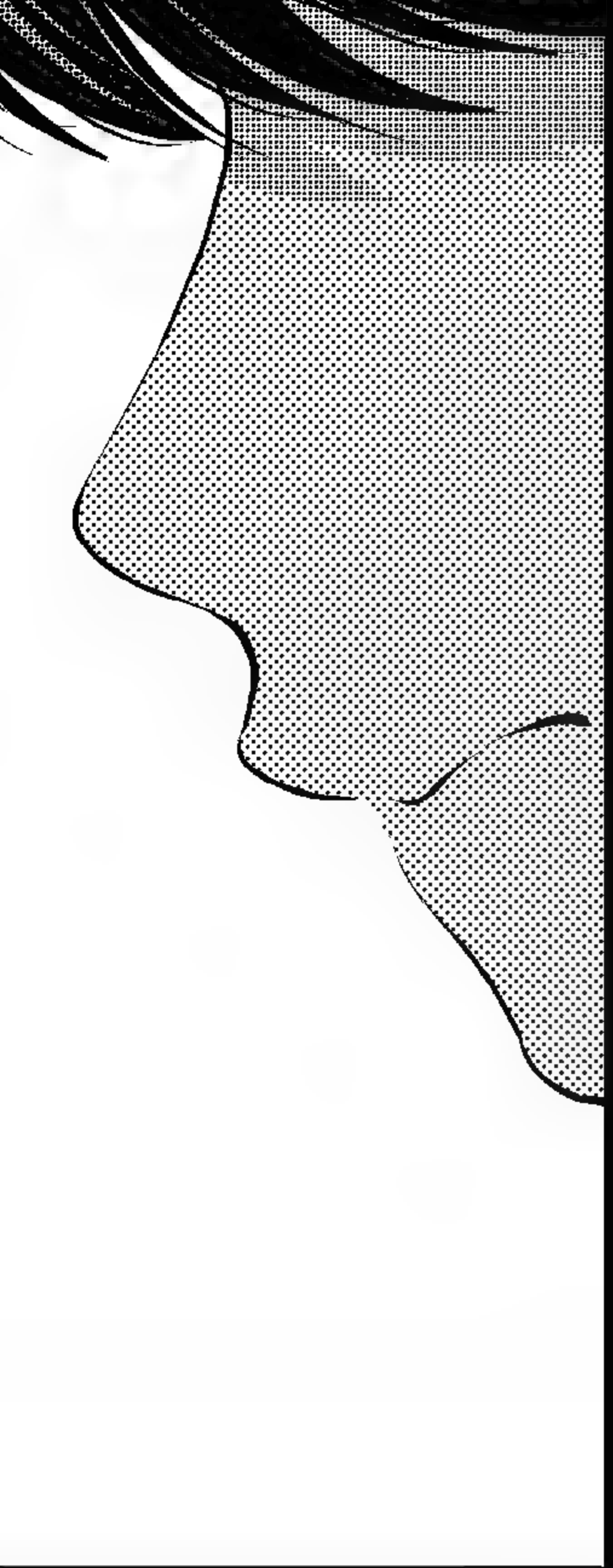
NO,
NOT...



**HINA-NEE'S
HOME RIGHT
NOW.**

**THE
TRUTH
IS,**





I TRUST
YOU,
NATSUO.

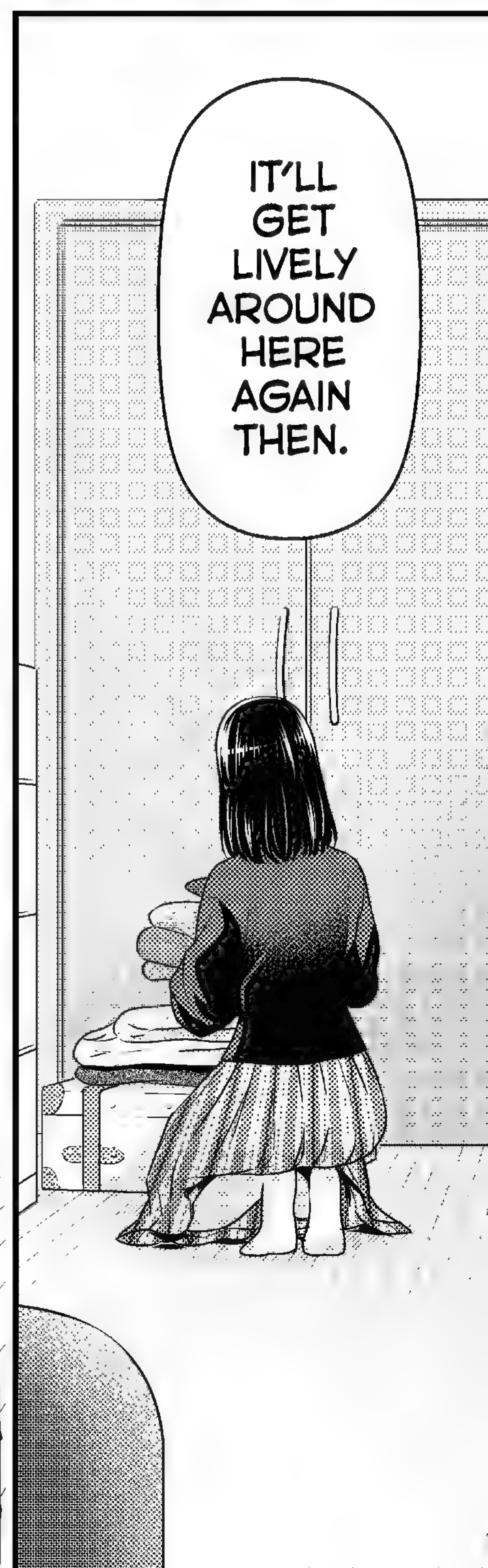
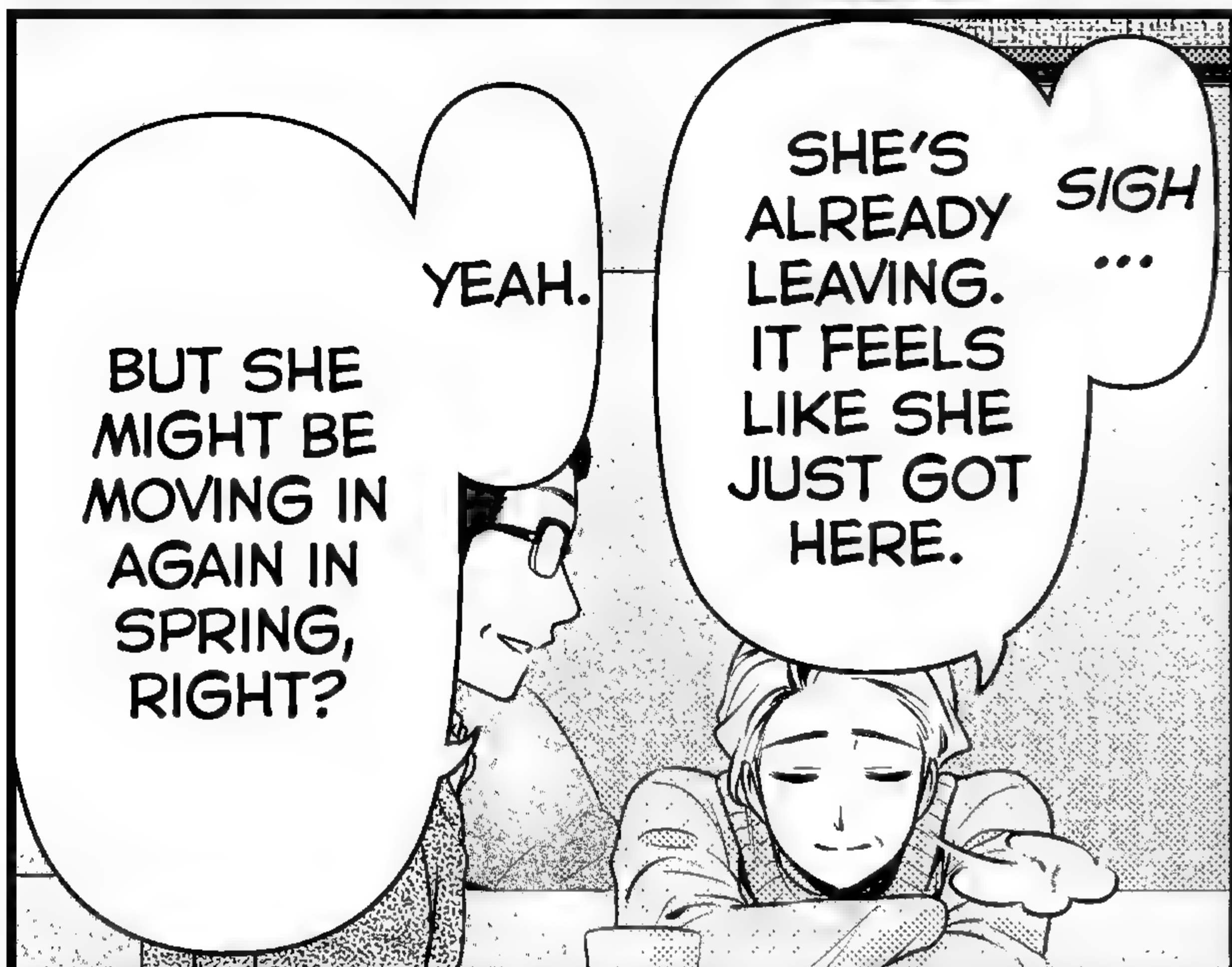
OKAY.

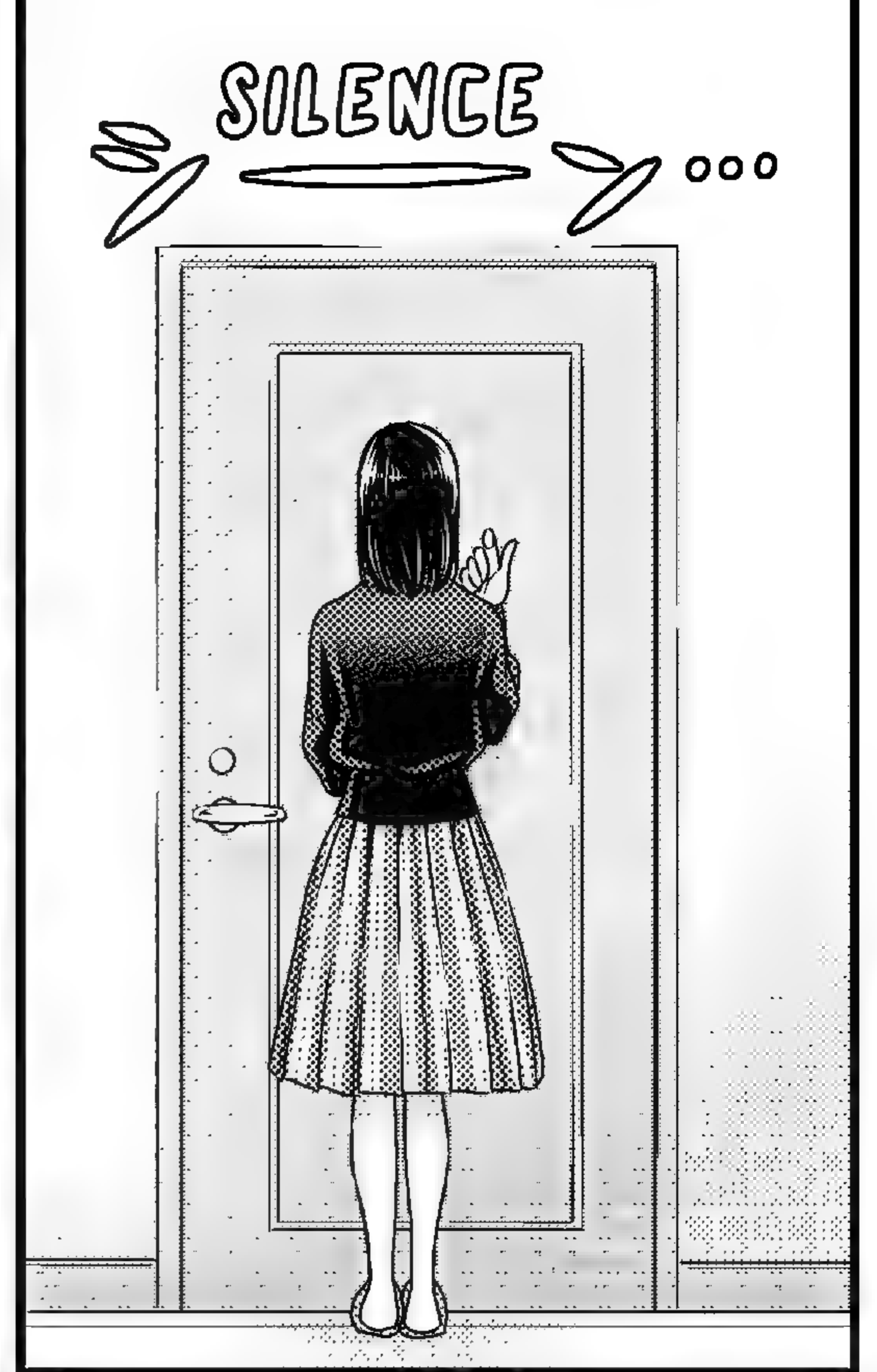
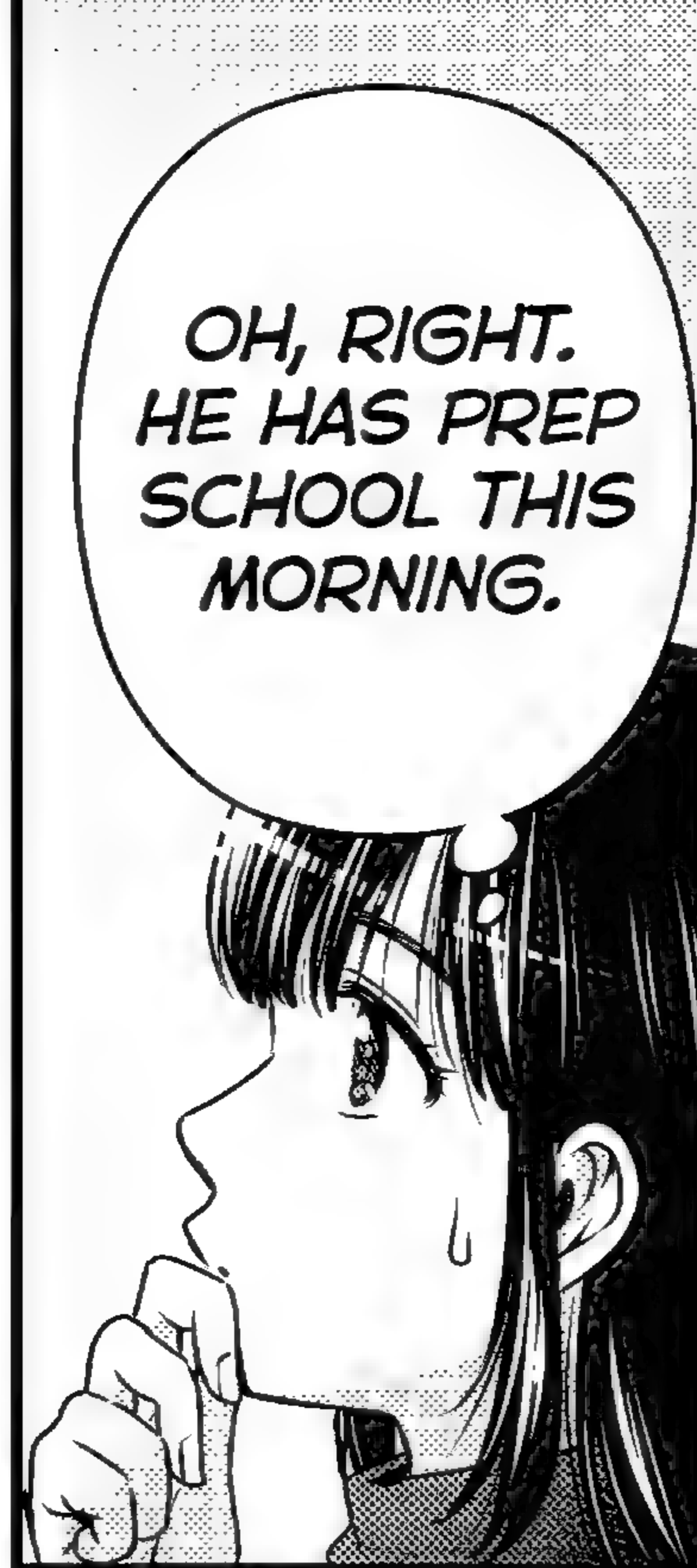


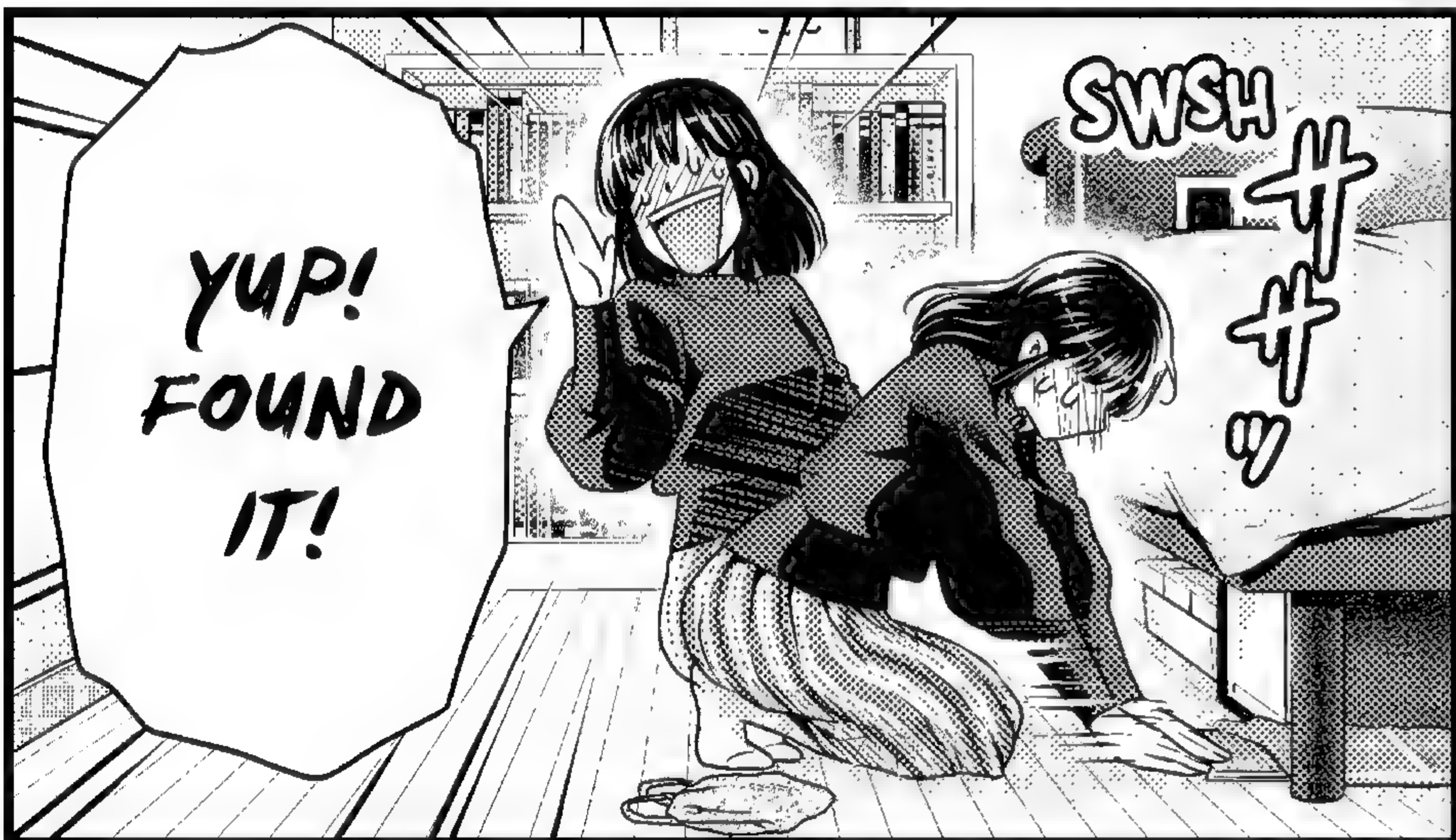
RUI
...

THANKS..









YUP!
FOUND
IT!



HINAAA!
DID YOU
FIND
YOUR
TOP?



...NATSUO
STILL...?

DO YOU
THINK...



NO WAY!

NO, NO,
NO, NO!
IT'S JUST
A PORN
MAG!



...



WELL, HE IS
A BOY. OF
COURSE HE
HAS SOME
PORN MAGA-
ZINES.

TH-THAT
STAR-
TLED
ME!

UNDER THE
BED IS THE
STANDARD
HIDING
PLACE,
TOO!

BUT...

IF HE DOES,

THEN...



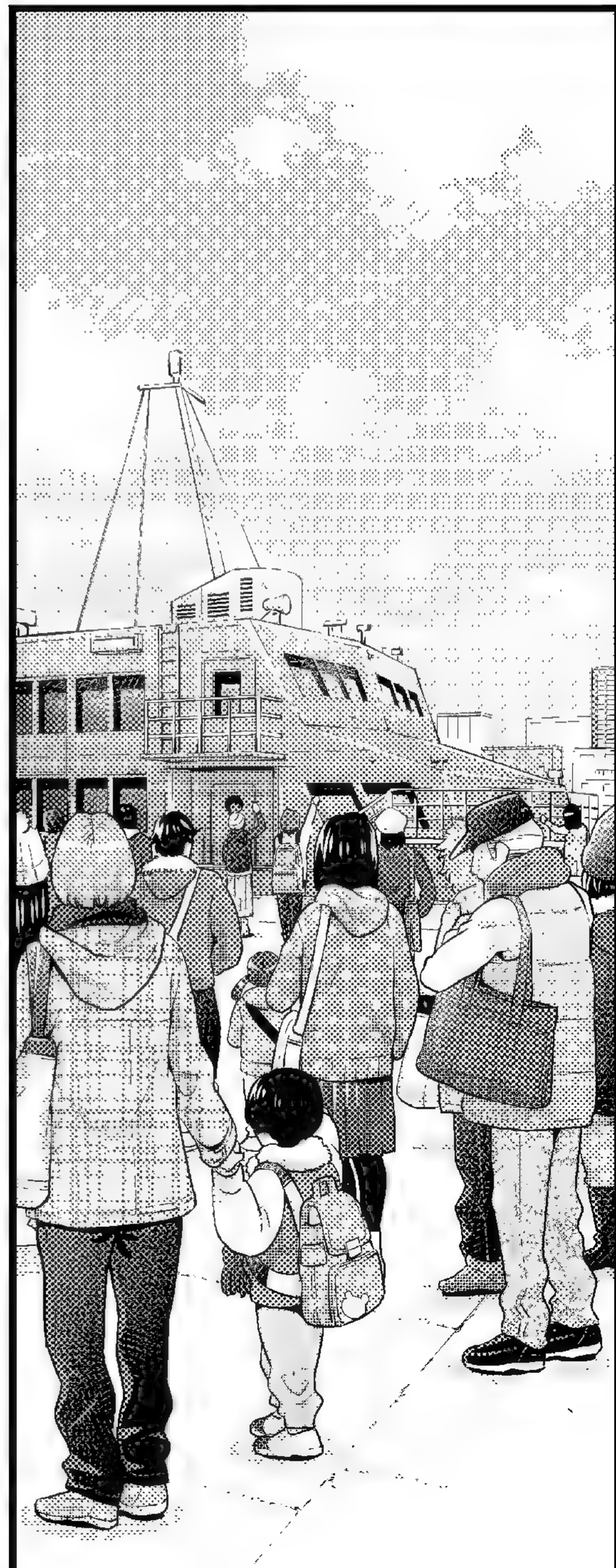
HANG
IN THERE
UNTIL
SPRING.

ALL
RIGHT.

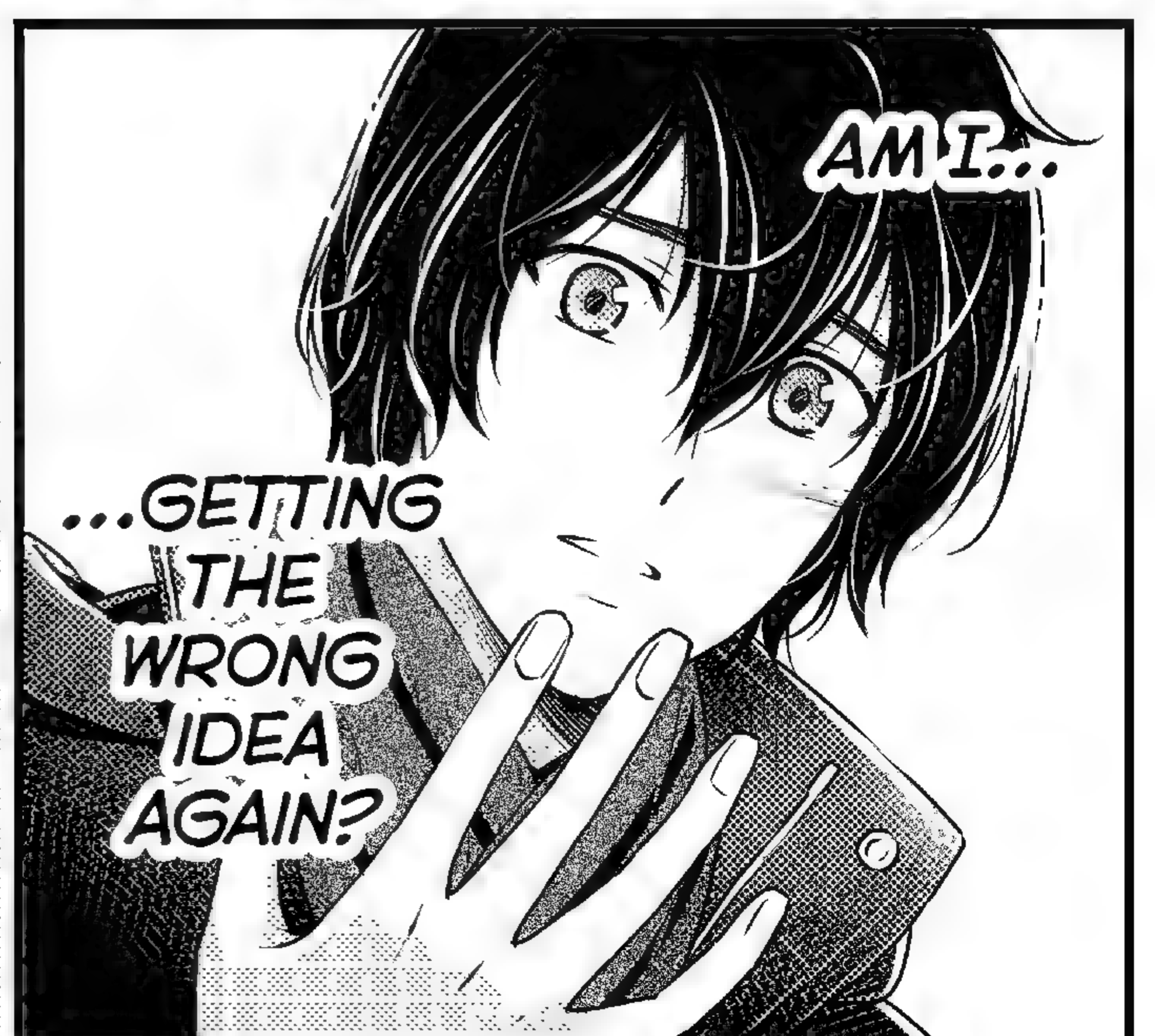
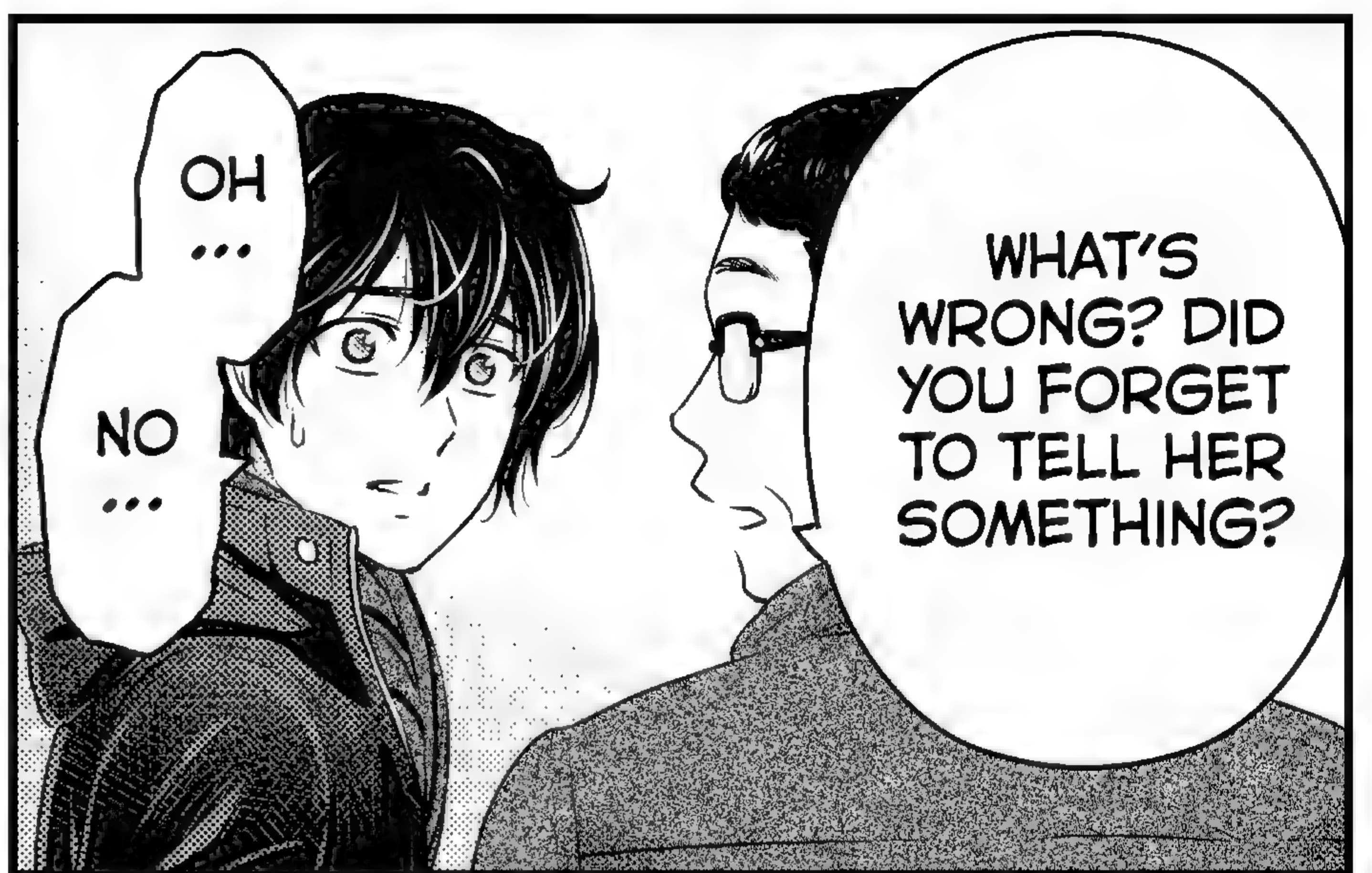
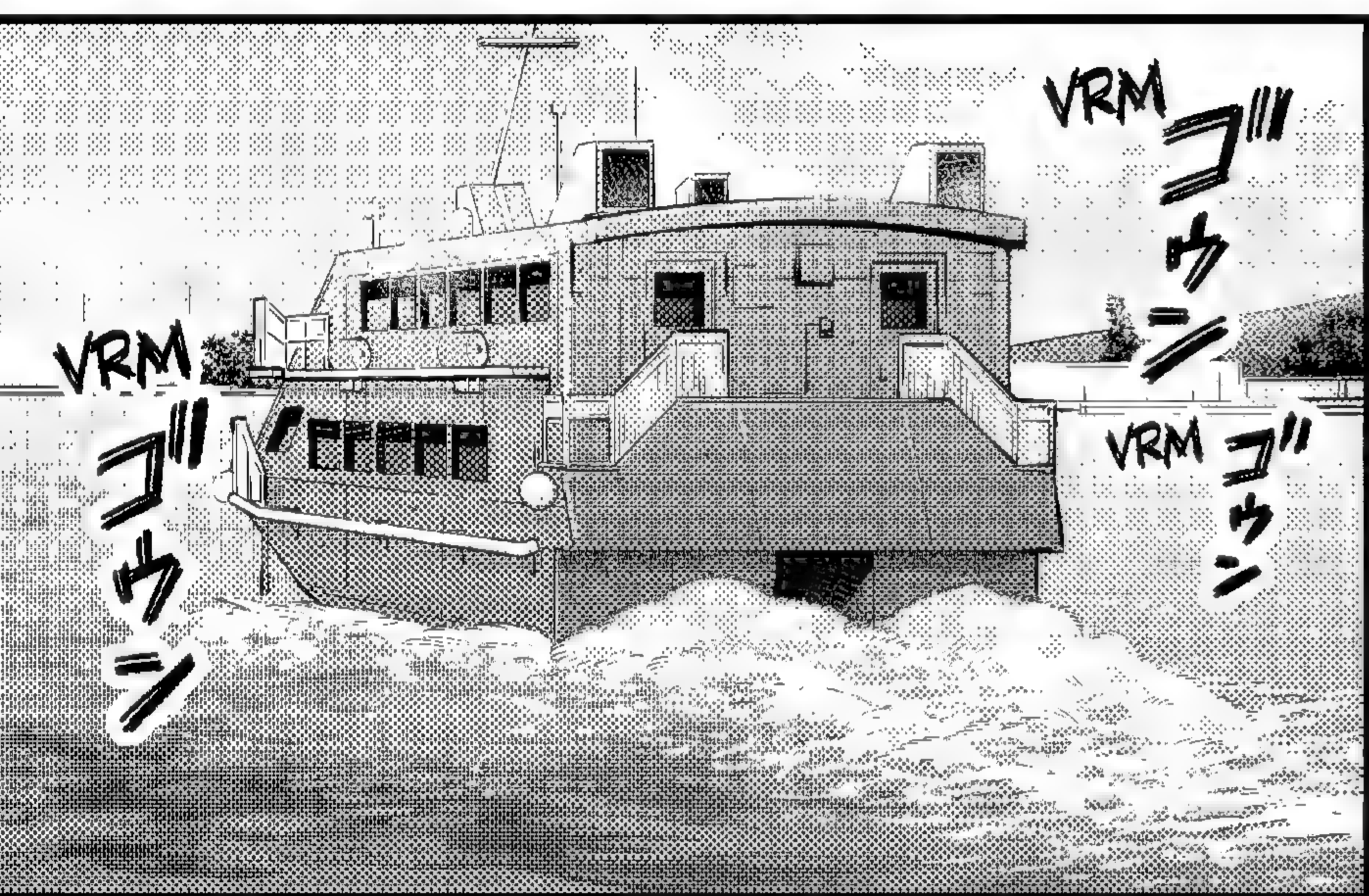
I
WILL.

ARE YOU
GOING TO
TELL THEM
ONCE
SCHOOL
STARTS?

I HAVE
TO TELL
THE HEAD
TEACHER
FIRST.







TWO
DAYS
LATER



YOU
BOTH
HAVE
WORK,
AFTER
ALL.

IT'S
FINE.

SORRY
WE
CAN'T
MAKE
IT.

ALL RIGHT.
THANKS
FOR MEETING
RUI AT THE
AIRPORT,
NATSUO-KUN.



PROBABLY
WHERE
ALL THOSE
PEOPLE ARE
COMING
OUT FROM,
HUH?



THAT
LOOKS
LIKE
RUI.

IS IT
HER?

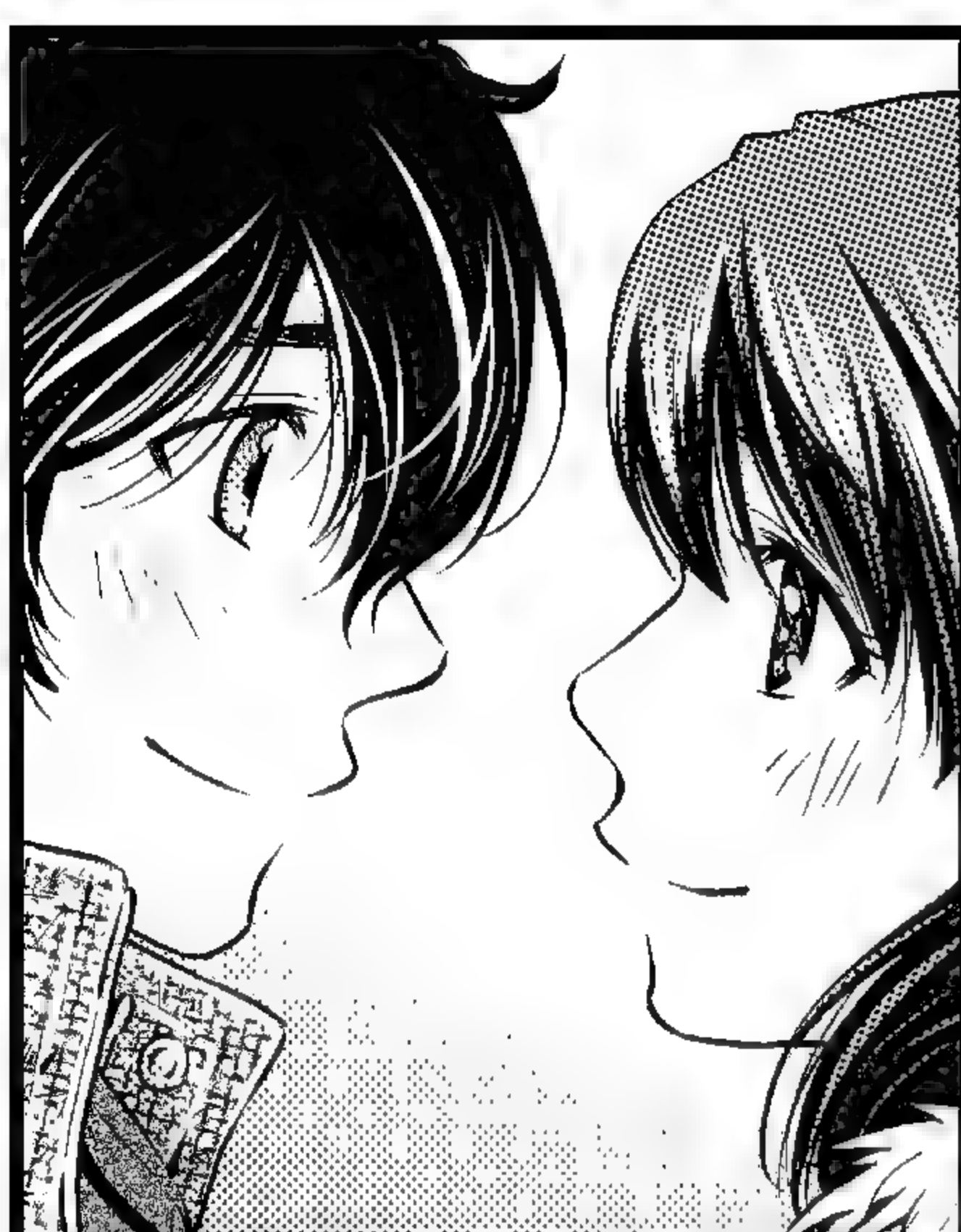
OH, SHE
NOTICED
ME.

WHERE'S
THE
EXIT?

UHH.
LET'S
SEE.

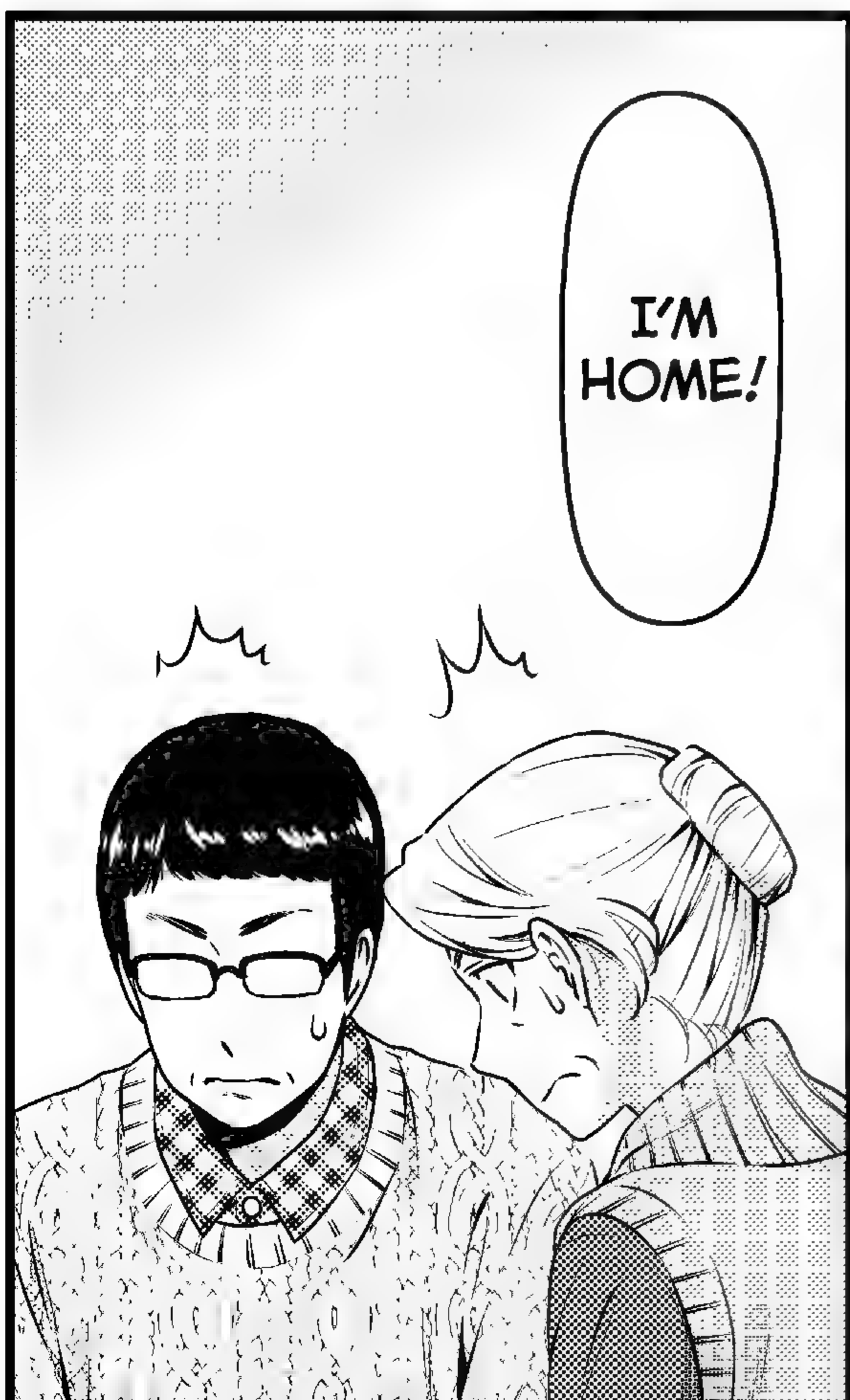
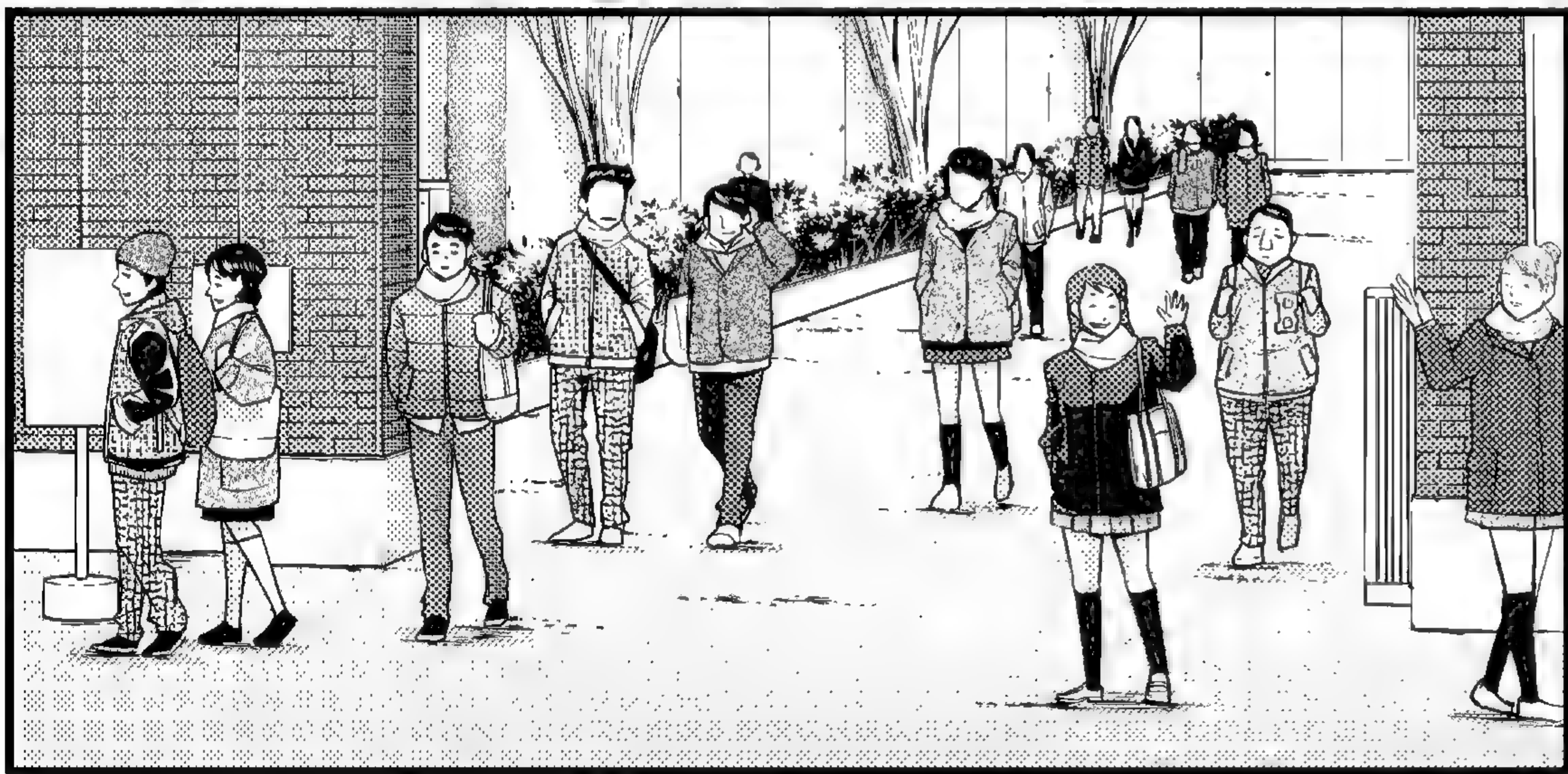
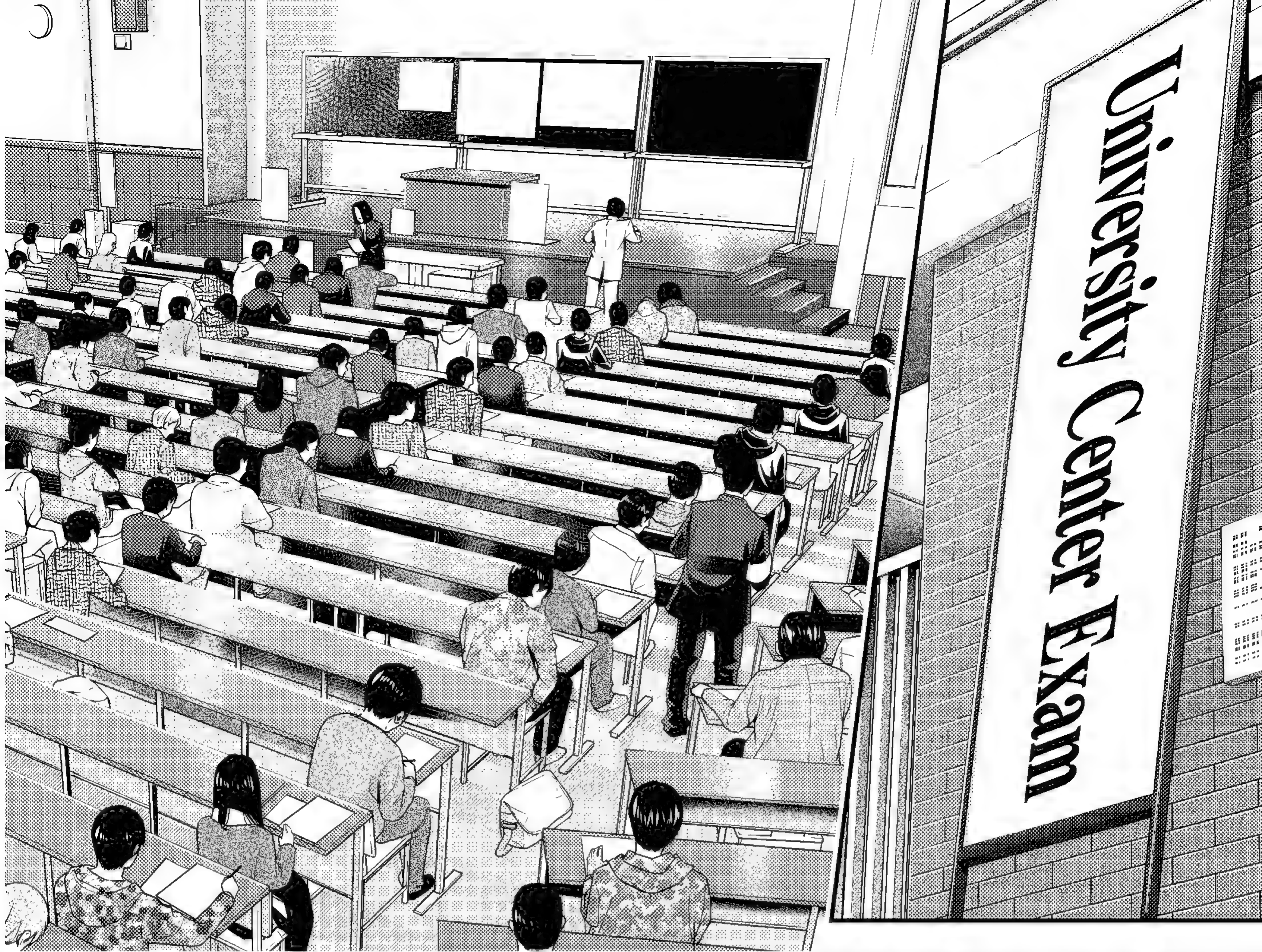


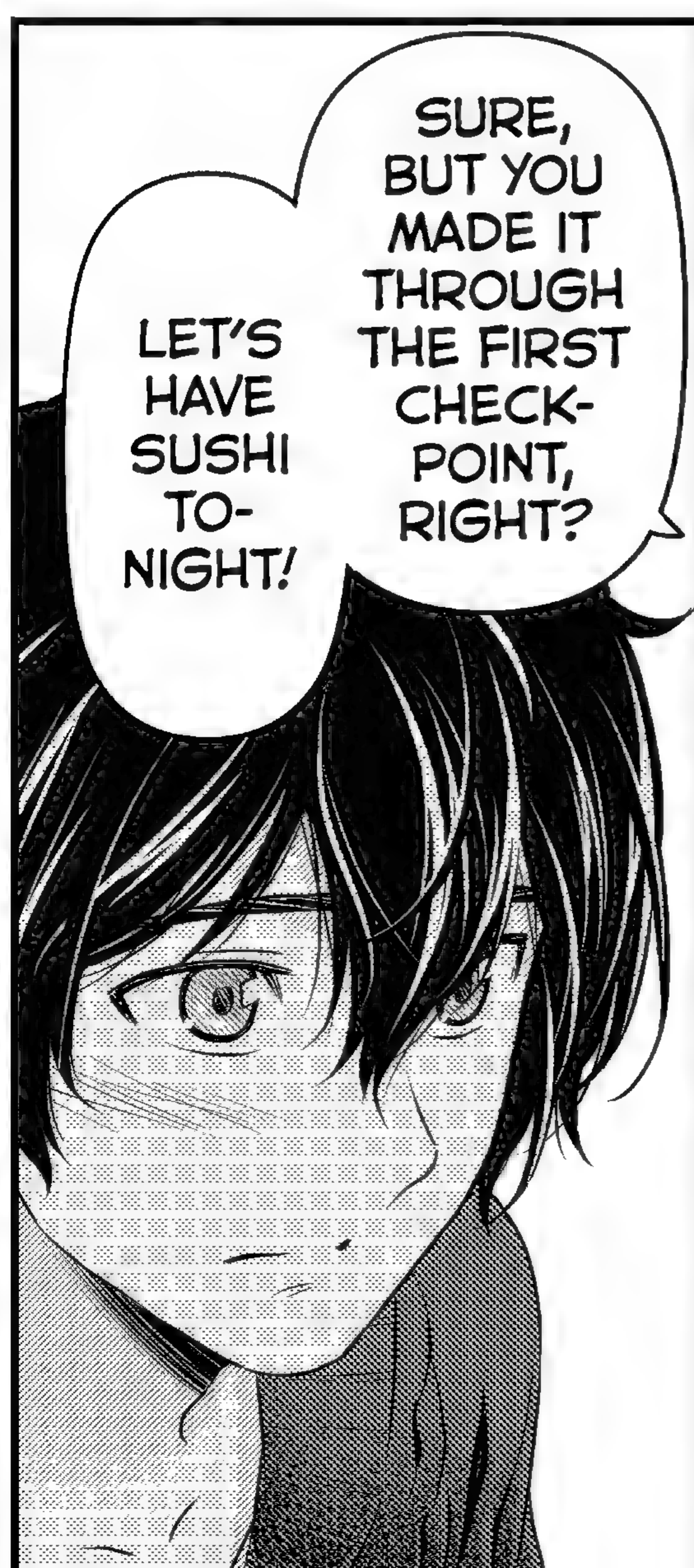
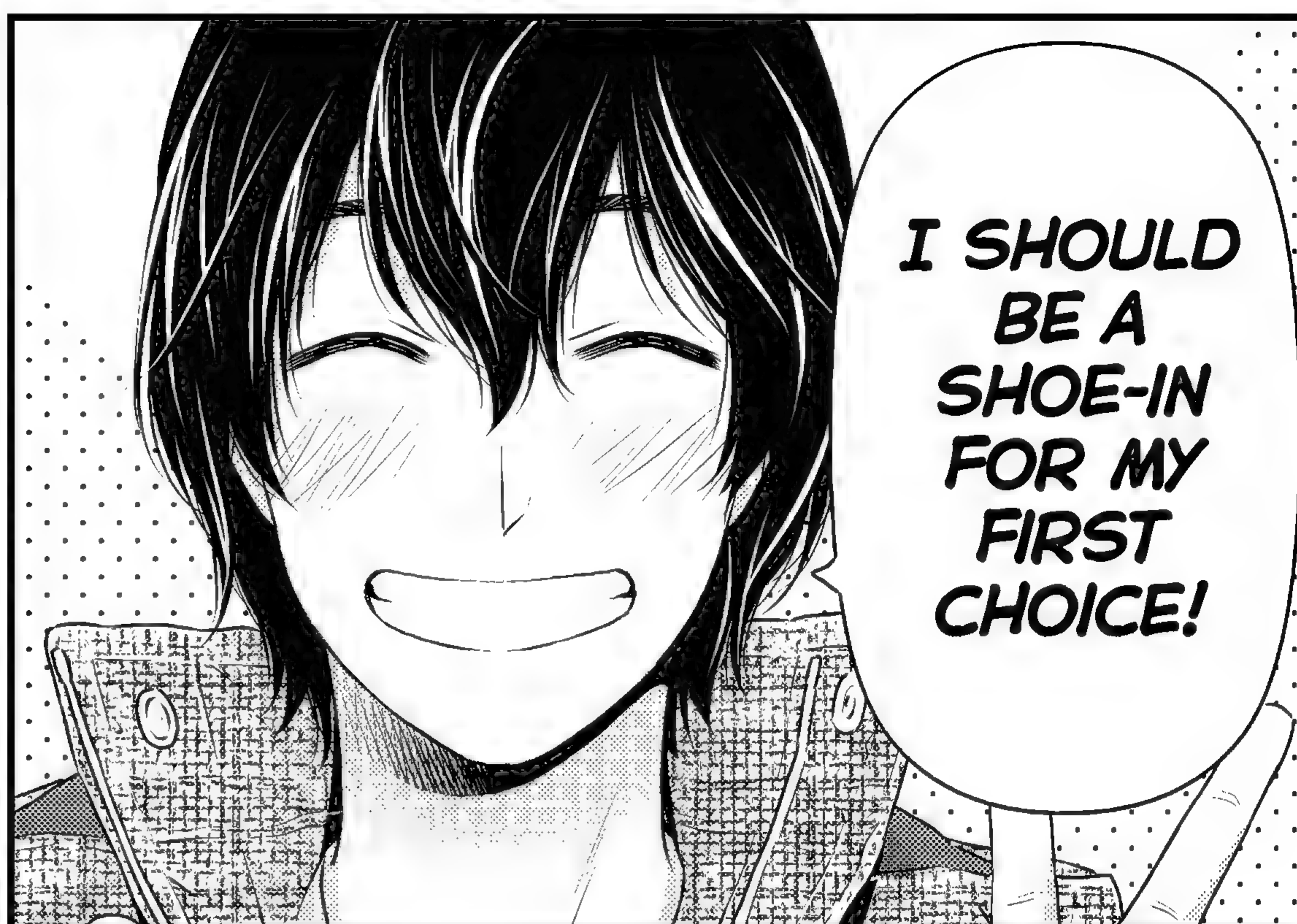
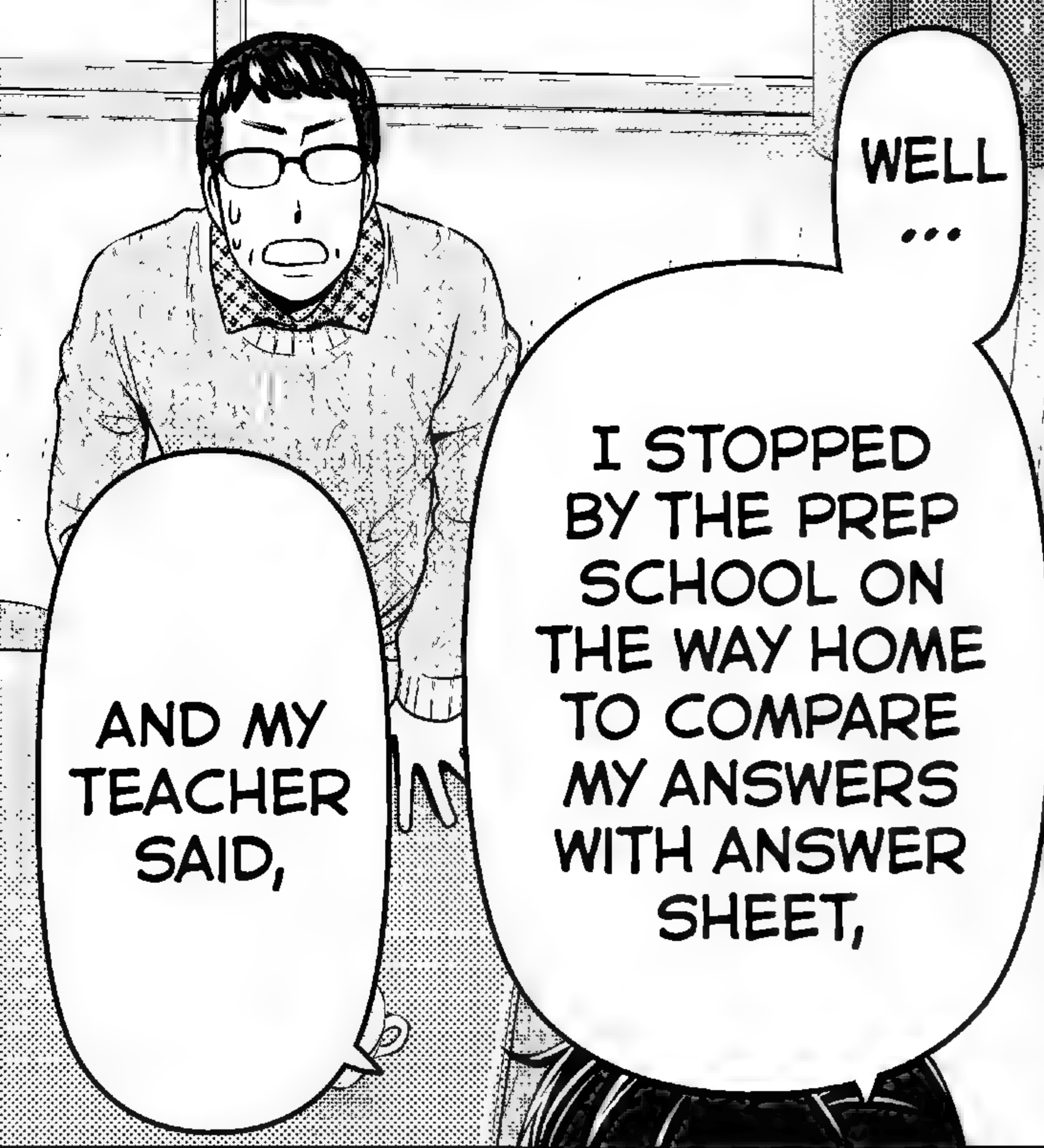






CHAPTER 134: FROM NOW ON

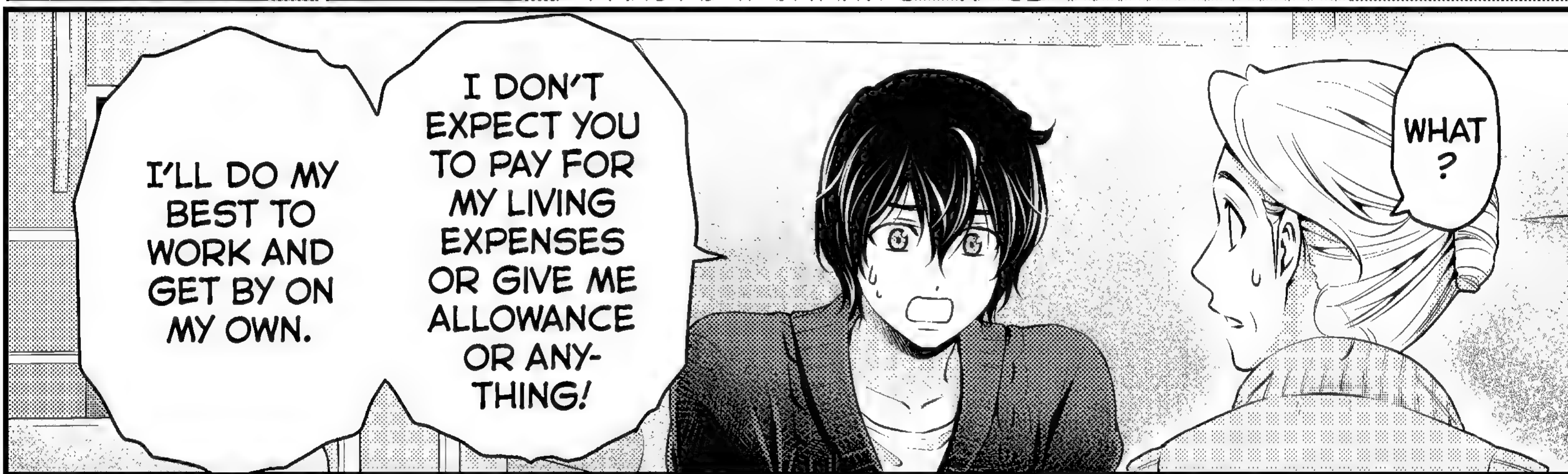






IS IT
OKAY IF
I MOVE
OUT?

IF I MAKE
IT INTO
COLLEGE,



I'LL DO MY
BEST TO
WORK AND
GET BY ON
MY OWN.

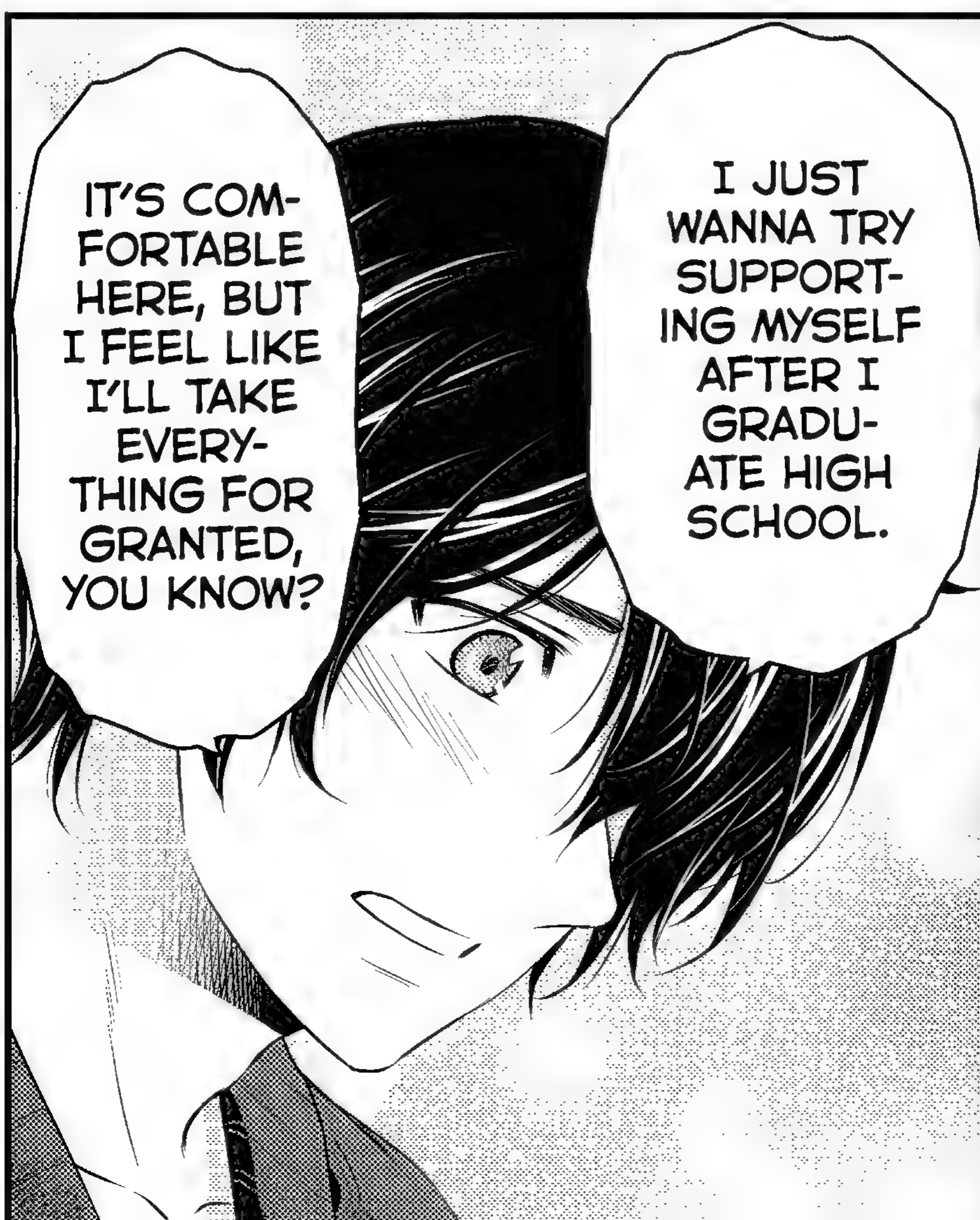
I DON'T
EXPECT YOU
TO PAY FOR
MY LIVING
EXPENSES
OR GIVE ME
ALLOWANCE
OR ANY-
THING!

WHAT
?



IS
THAT
...

...TOO
MUCH
TO
ASK?



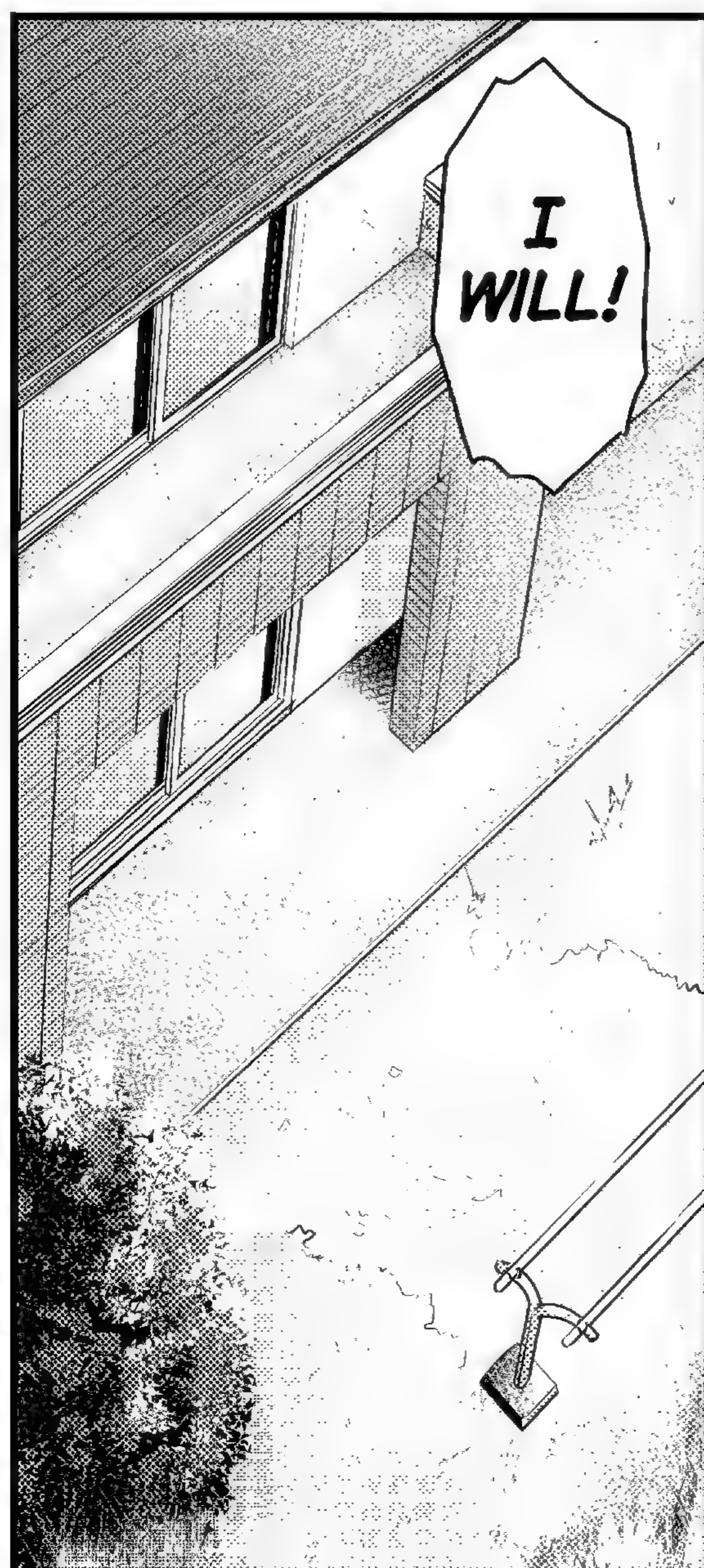
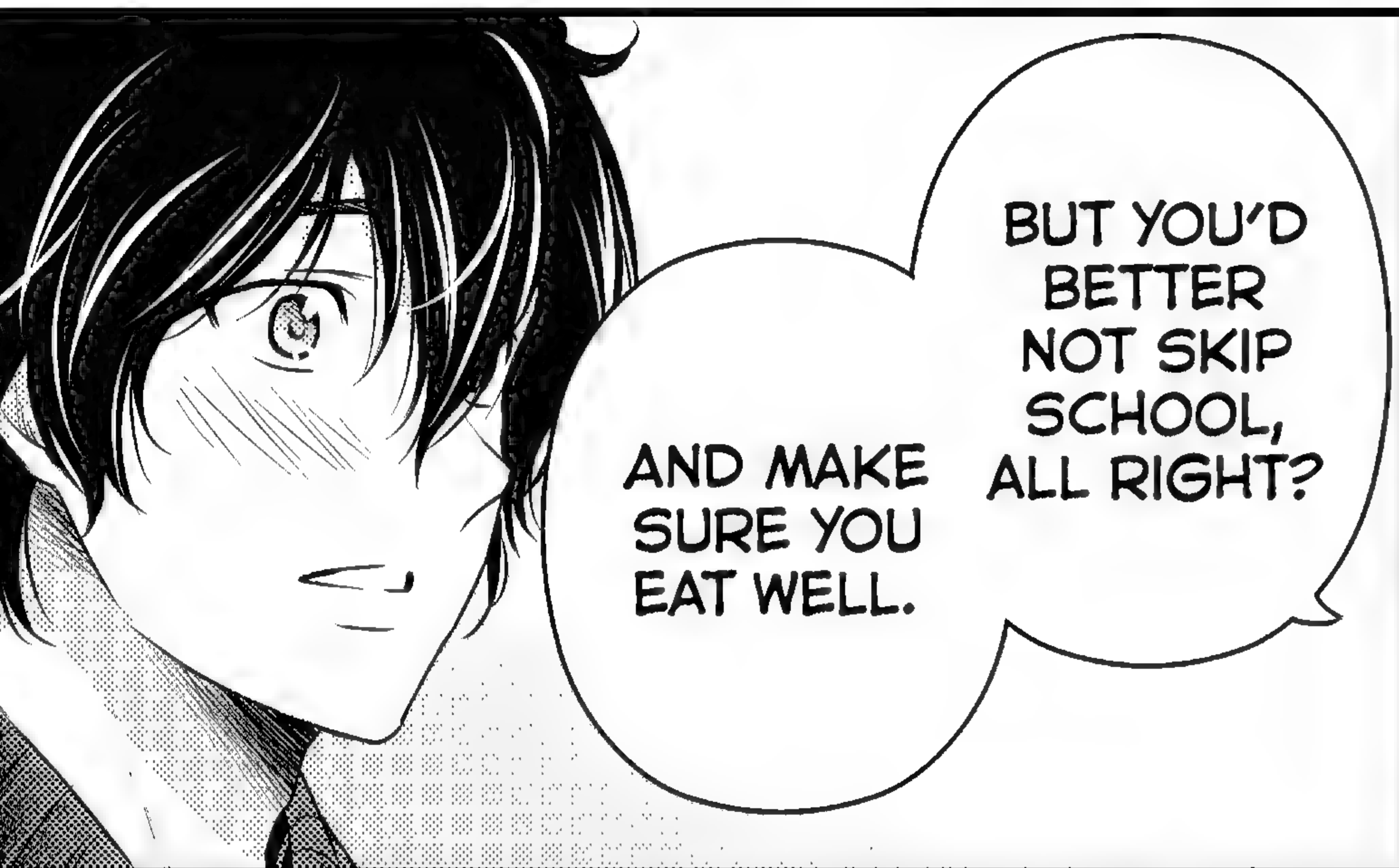
IT'S COM-
FORTABLE
HERE, BUT
I FEEL LIKE
I'LL TAKE
EVERY-
THING FOR
GRANTED,
YOU KNOW?

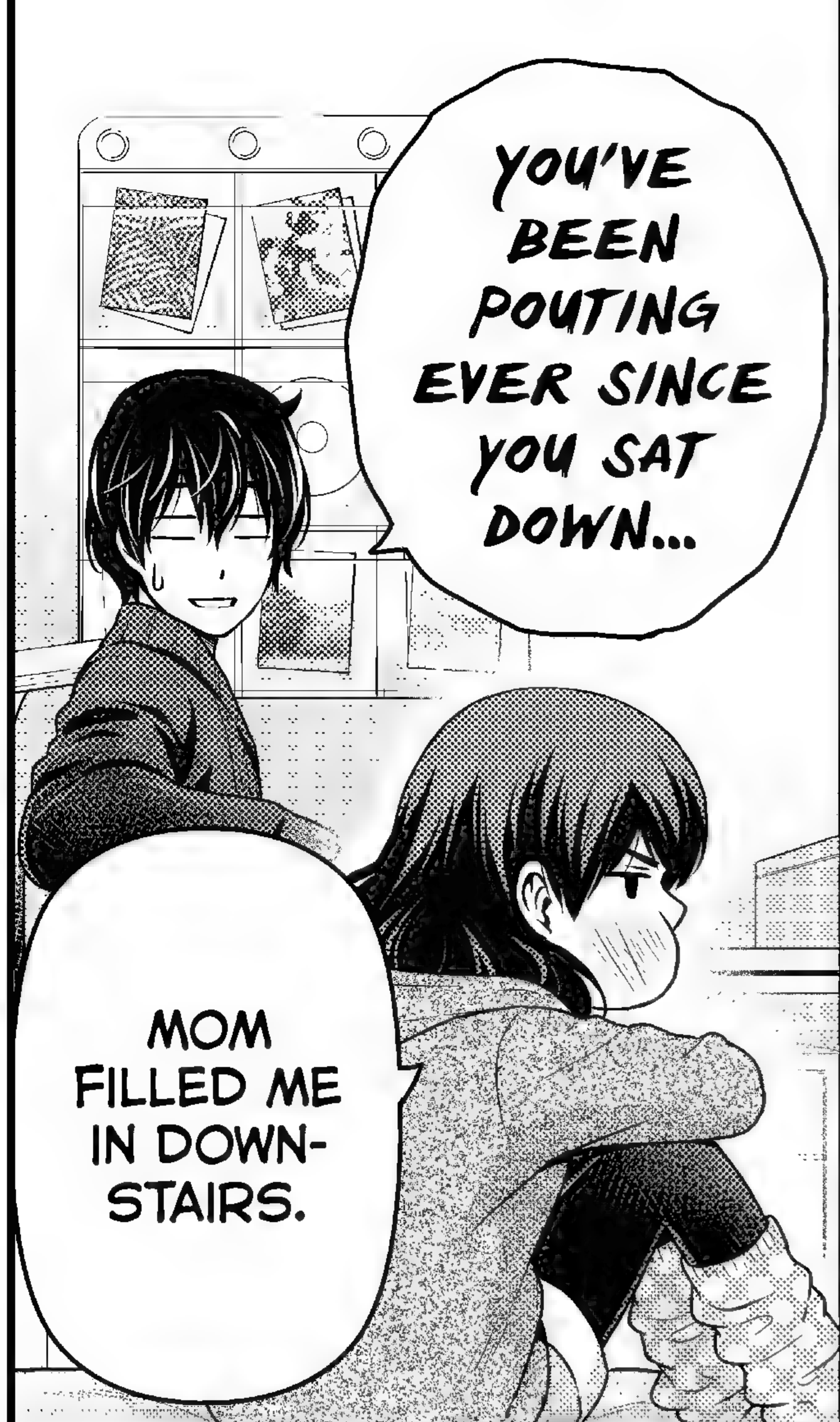
I JUST
WANNA TRY
SUPPORT-
ING MYSELF
AFTER I
GRADU-
ATE HIGH
SCHOOL.



BUT ALL OF
THE SCHOOLS
YOU CHOSE
ARE COMMUT-
ING DISTANCE
FROM HERE.

Y-YEAH,
BUT...





YOU'VE
BEEN
POUTING
EVER SINCE
YOU SAT
DOWN...

MOM
FILLED ME
IN DOWN-
STAIRS.



SH RUFF

ARE
YOU
LISTEN-
ING?



...WHY
DIDN'T YOU
BOTHR
TALKING
TO ME
FIRST?

WHAT I
WANNA
KNOW
IS...



I FIGURED
IT'D BE
BETTER TO
TELL YOU AFTER
EVERYTHING
WAS DECIDED
INSTEAD OF
MAKING YOU
WORRY FOR
NOTHING.

FOR
STARTERS,
THERE'S NO
WAY I CAN
MOVE OUT
IF I DON'T
GET INTO
COLLEGE,

AND I
THOUGHT
DAD
WOULD BE
AGAINST IT.



WELL, I
MEAN...

I STILL
WASN'T
SURE
ONE WAY
OR THE
OTHER.

BUT
...

HINA-
NEE'S
COMING
HOME IN
SPRING,
RIGHT?



I JUST
FELT
LIKE WHY
BOTHER IF
I DIDN'T
NEED TO.

IT'S NOT
LIKE I NEV-
ER WANTED
TO TRY
LIVING ON
MY OWN,

...UNTIL
RECENTLY.

BESIDES,
I HADN'T
EVEN
DECIDED
FOR MY-
SELF...



AND I'M SURE
THINGS WON'T
BE AS AWKWARD
BETWEEN YOU
AND HINA-NEE
WITHOUT ME
AROUND.



I'D RATHER
MOVE OUT
BEFORE
ANYTHING
TEARS US
APART.



THAT MEANS
IT'S GONNA
GET A LOT
HARDER TO
KEEP OUR
RELATION-
SHIP SOLID.



WE CAN
ALWAYS
SKYPE,

AND WE'LL
BE ABLE TO
ACT LIKE A
COUPLE WAY
MORE ONCE
I MOVE OUT.

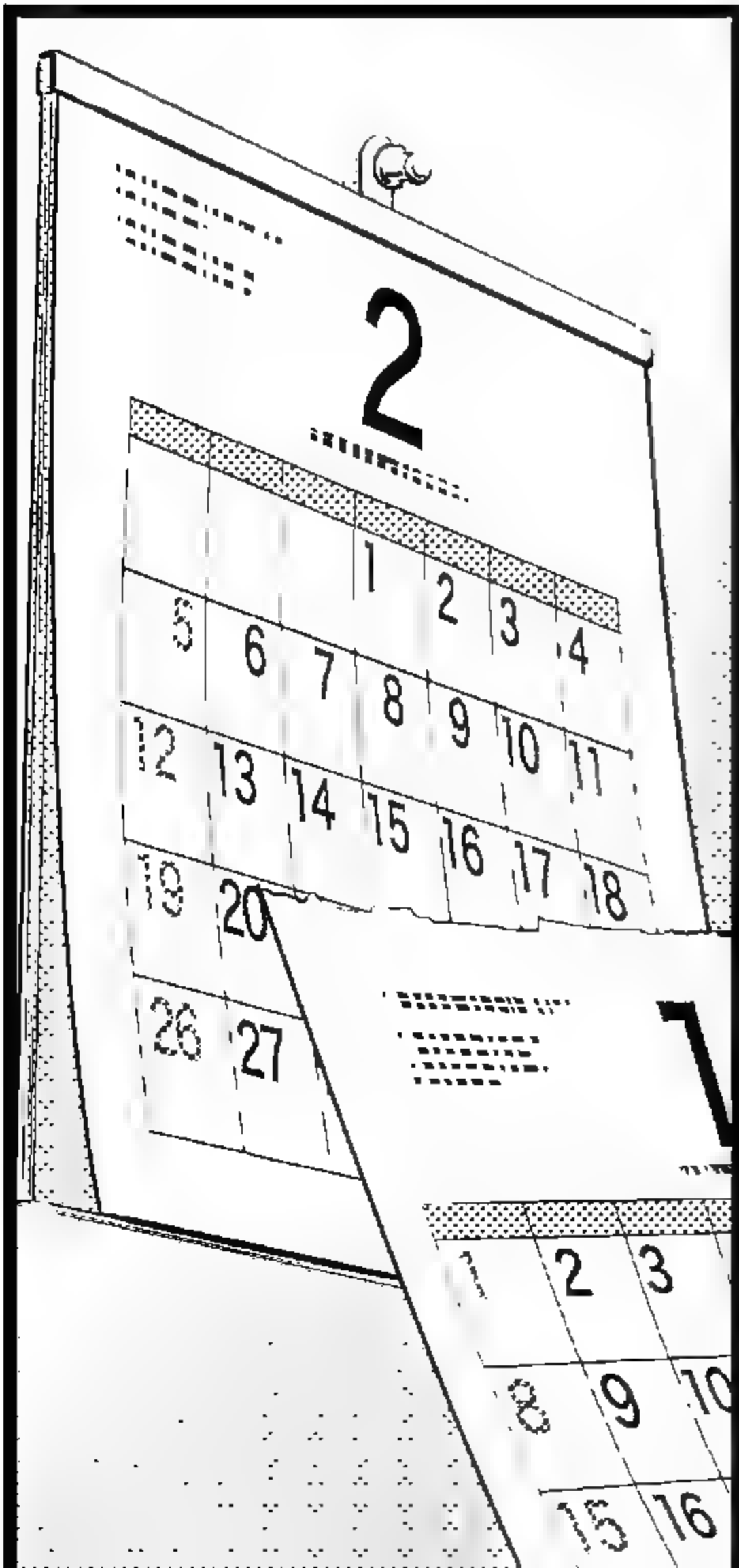
OKAY
?



I GET
WHAT
YOU'RE
SAYING,

BUT IT
STILL
MAKES
ME SAD
TO THINK
THAT...

...I
WON'T
GET TO
SEE YOU
EVERY
DAY.



I TOLD
YOU
BEFORE,
REMEM-
BER?

CLASS IS
OPTIONAL
FROM
FEBRUARY
ON.

YOU'VE
BEEN
WORKING
AN AWFUL
LOT LATELY,
RUI. WHAT
ABOUT
SCHOOL?

I'M
TAKING
OFF.

OH,
IS IT?

DONUT & DONUT
★ ★ ★
"Luck is in the hole"
SPONSOR: [illegible]
FRESH CONFECTIONERY

I'M
FINE.

YOU
SHOULD
RUB SOME
OINTMENT
ON THEM
...

I THOUGHT
SO...
DID YOU
BURN
YOURSELF
AT WORK?

YEAH,
RIGHT.
JUST
LOOK
HOW
RED—

LET
ME SEE
YOUR
HANDS!

RUI!

YOU
KEPT QUIET
BECAUSE
YOU DIDN'T
WANT ME
TO WORRY,
RIGHT?

DON'T
WORRY
ABOUT
IT...

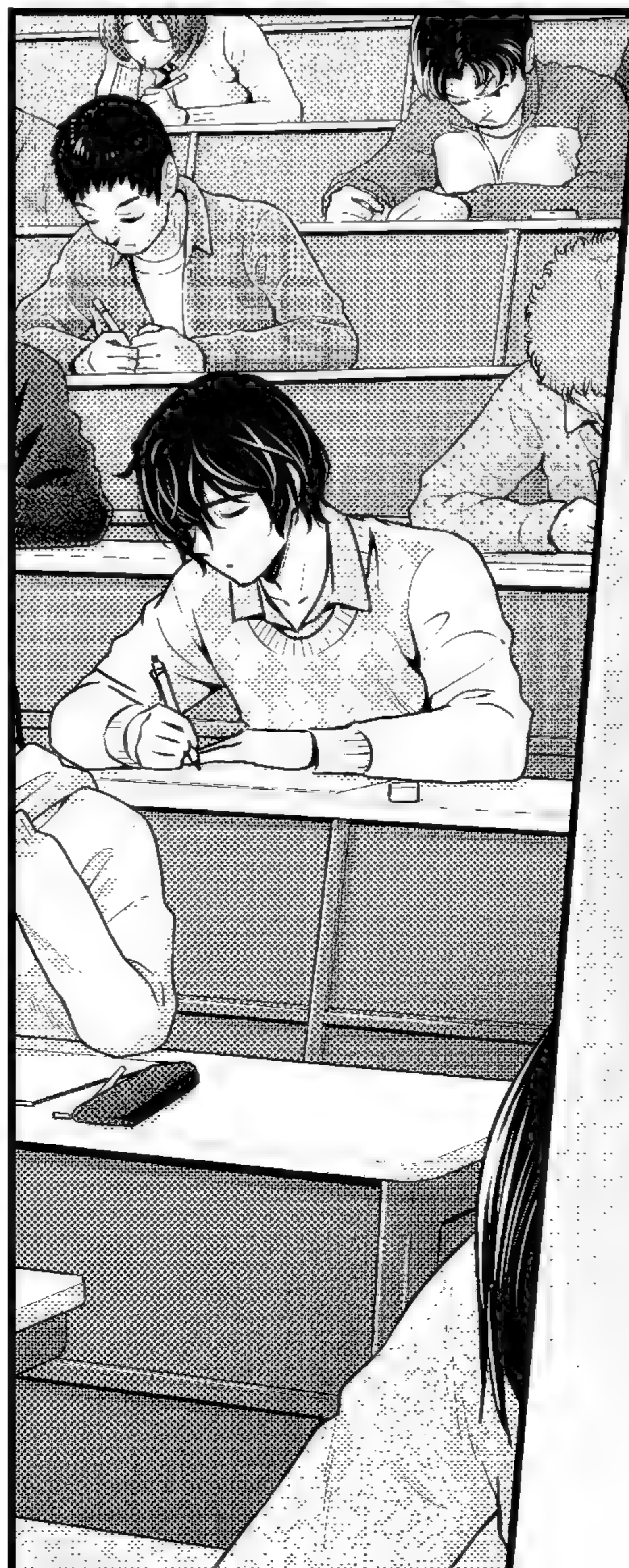
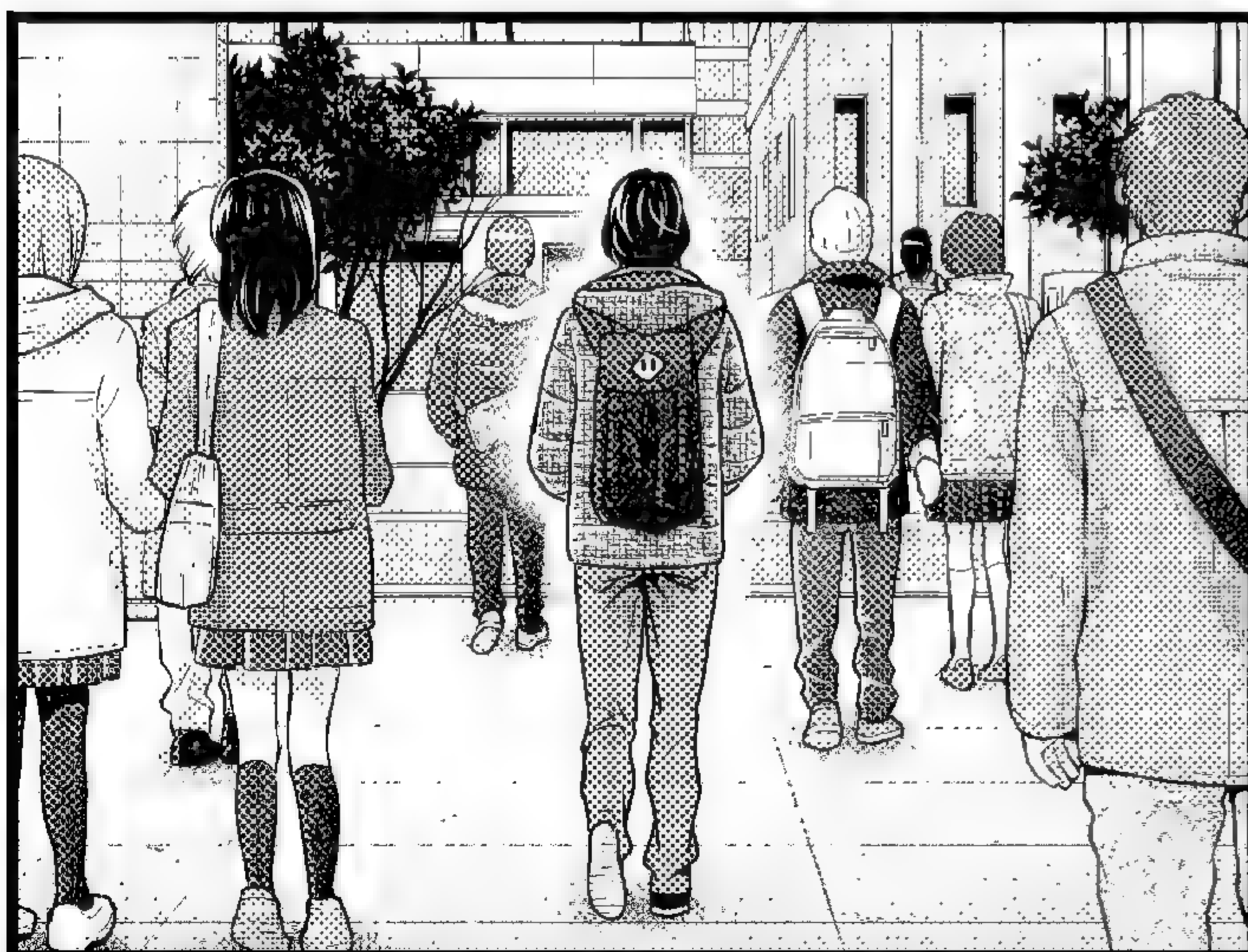
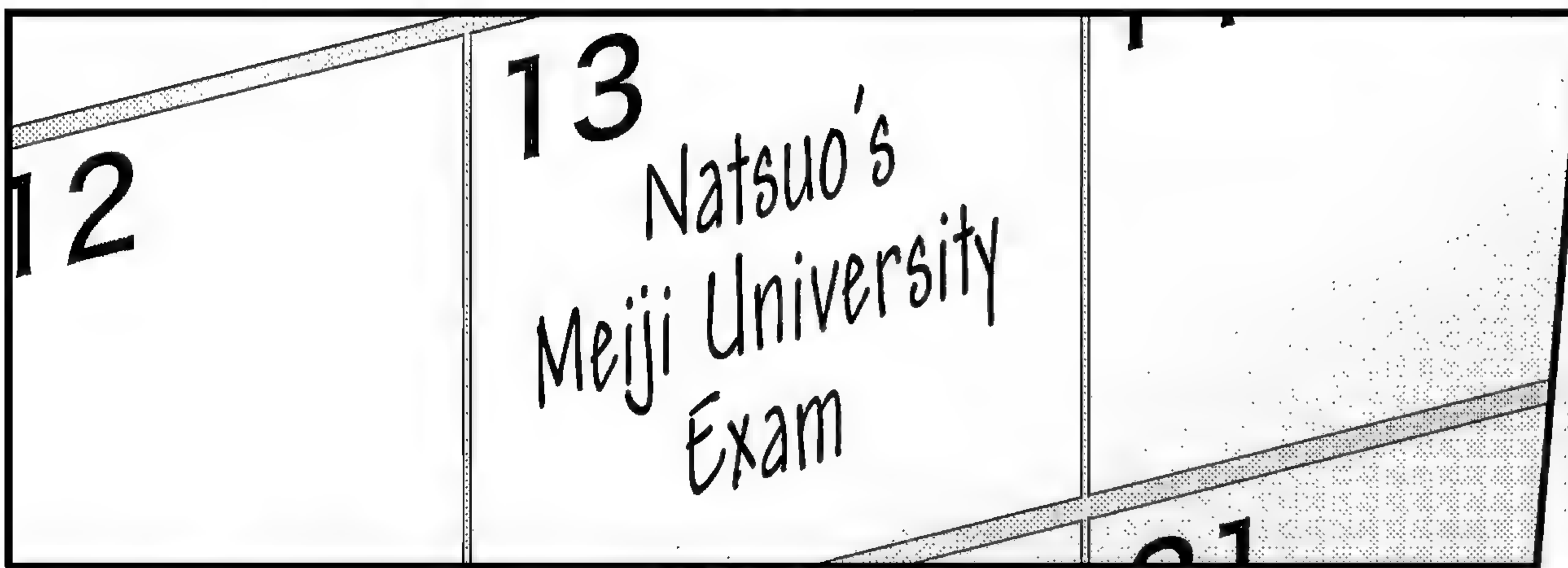
....!

WELL,
I'M DOING
THE SAME.

I
SAID
I'M
FINE!

S
N
A
P

THEY
LOOK
REALLY
RED!







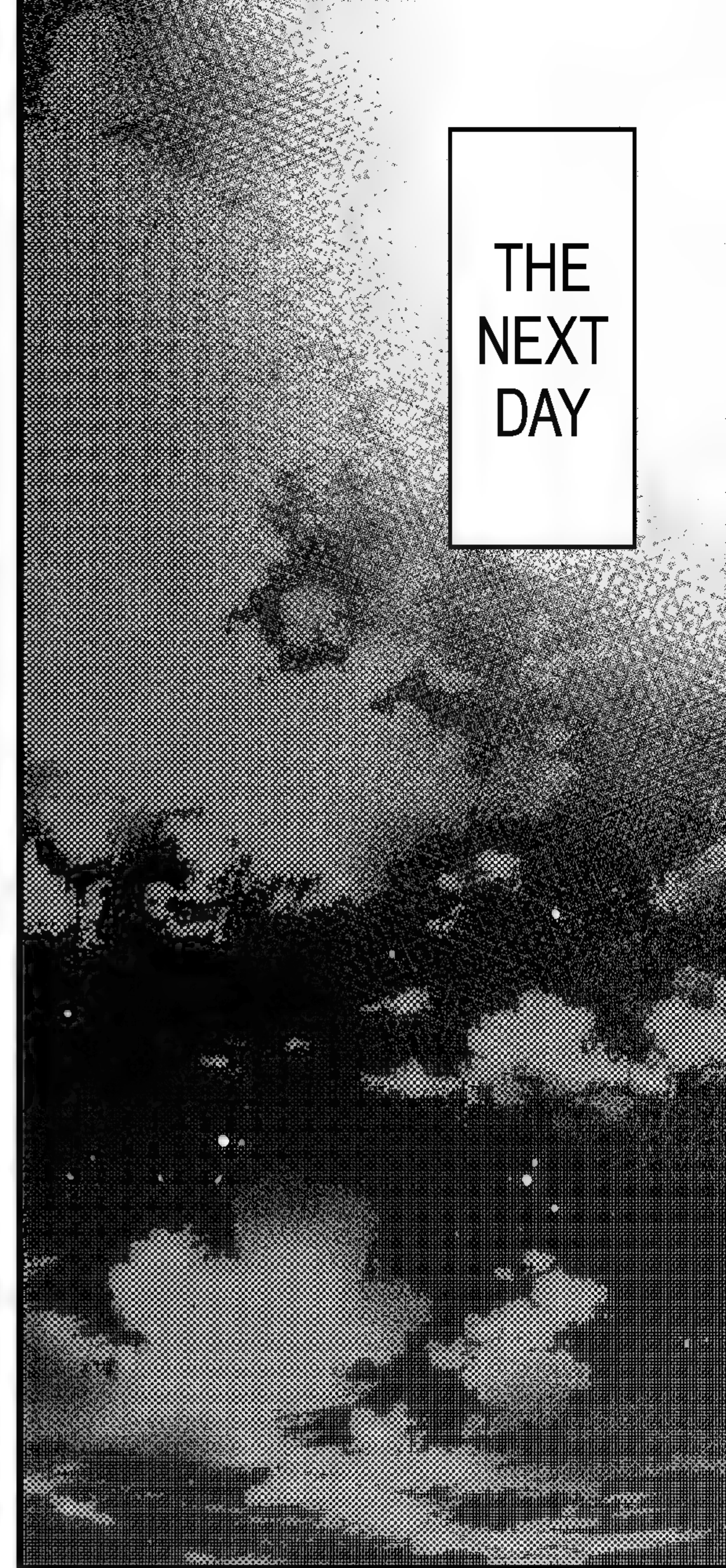
SHE'LL
BE HOME
LATE
TONIGHT.

RUI SAID
SHE HAS
TO WORK
OVERTIME.

OH,
REALLY?

ALL
RIGHT.

HANG IN
THERE.



THE
NEXT
DAY



I GUESS
SHE HAS
A LOT TO
LEARN NOW
THAT SHE'S
WORKING
IN THE
KITCHEN.

SOUNDS
ROUGH.



HOW DID IT
TURN OUT
LIKE THIS?

BA
DING



SHE
DIDN'T...

...MENTION
ANYTHING
ABOUT
VALENTINE'S
DAY THIS
MORNING,
EITHER.



I'M
GONNA
GO PICK
UP RUI.

OH, ALL
RIGHT.
THANKS,
NATSUO-
KUN.

INBOX

om Rui
bject (No Subject)

Can you come get me
since it's late?
I heard there's a creep
lurking around here lately.



WE'RE
TOGETHER
BECAUSE WE
LOVE EACH
OTHER,

AND I CARE
ABOUT HER
A LOT,

IT FEELS LIKE
EVERYTHING I
DO WITH RUI
IN MIND...

...ONLY
MAKES HER
FEEL BAD.



I'M
HE-

FLICK



HUH?
THE
LIGHTS
ARE
OUT...

RUIII!



SO WHY
IS IT...

...THINGS
JUST NEVER
SEEM TO
GO WELL?



HAPPY
VALENTINE'S
DAY!

TA-
DAAA!



STONE

ANY-
ONE
HOME
?

HHEEY!

I'D
SAY THE
SURPRISE
WAS A
SUCCESS.

PFFFT!
HIS BRAIN
FROZE!



'COURSE
SHE'D
TRY TO
KEEP IT A
SECRET.

WELL, YEAH.
IT WAS
SUPPOSED
TO BE A
SURPRISE.



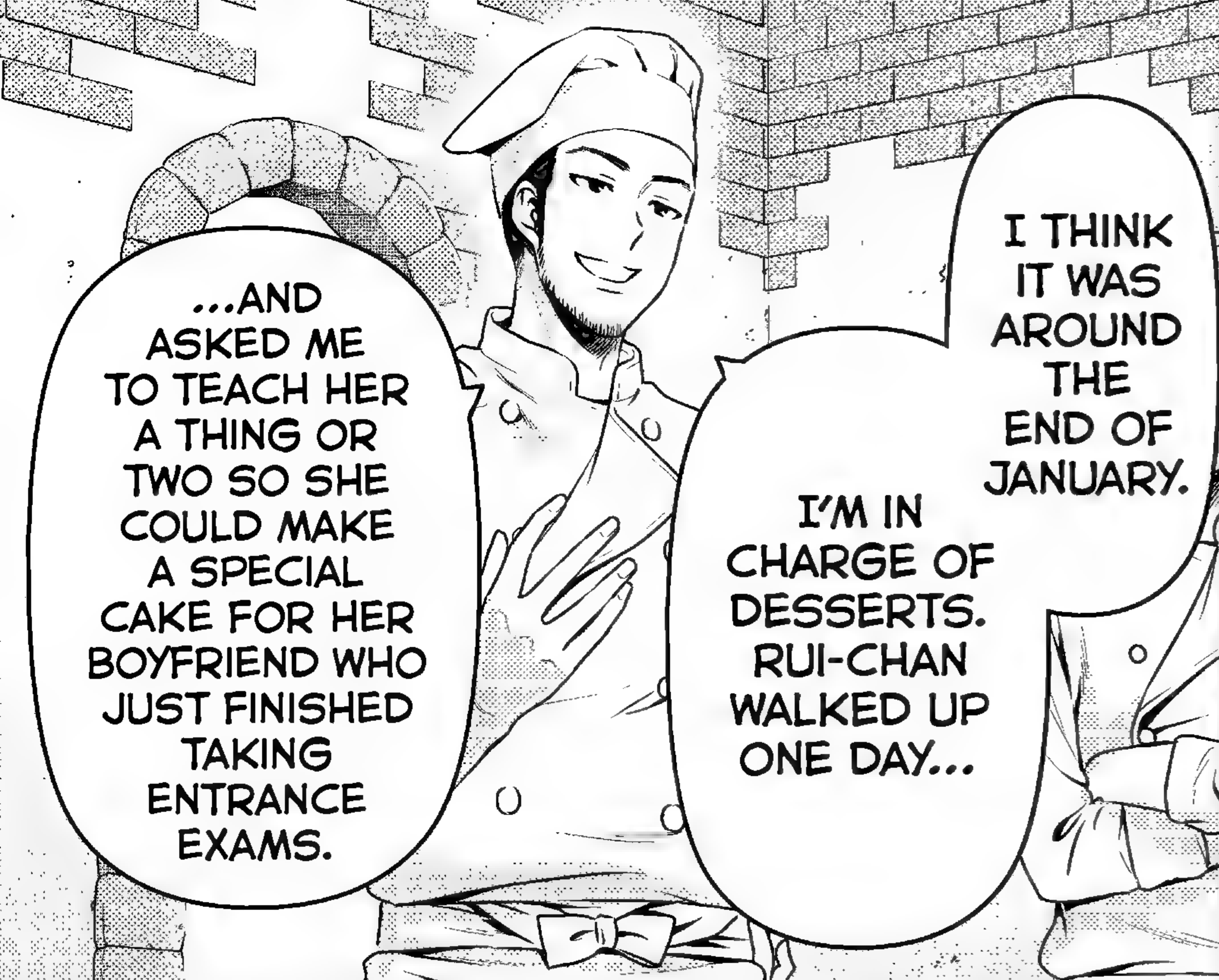
ER...
BUT...

YOU
SEEMED
LIKE YOU
WERE IN A
BAD MOOD
LATELY,

SO I
FIGURED I
SHOULDN'T
EXPECT
ANYTHING
THIS YEAR.



?!
!!



...AND ASKED ME TO TEACH HER A THING OR TWO SO SHE COULD MAKE A SPECIAL CAKE FOR HER BOYFRIEND WHO JUST FINISHED TAKING ENTRANCE EXAMS.

I THINK IT WAS AROUND THE END OF JANUARY.

I'M IN CHARGE OF DESSERTS. RUI-CHAN WALKED UP ONE DAY...



...BECAUSE SHE WAS NERVOUS THAT YOU'D FIND OUT.

I...I CAN'T LET HIM FIND OUT.

YOU PROBABLY THOUGHT SHE WAS PISSED...



IT'S CALLED PULL CANDY, AND IT'S MADE BY SHAPING CANDY WHILE IT'S STILL HOT.

I TOLD HER IT WASN'T SOMETHING YOU COULD LEARN IN A DAY, BUT SHE INSISTED.

SEE THESE CANDY SCULPTURES?



...HER HANDS WERE SO RED.

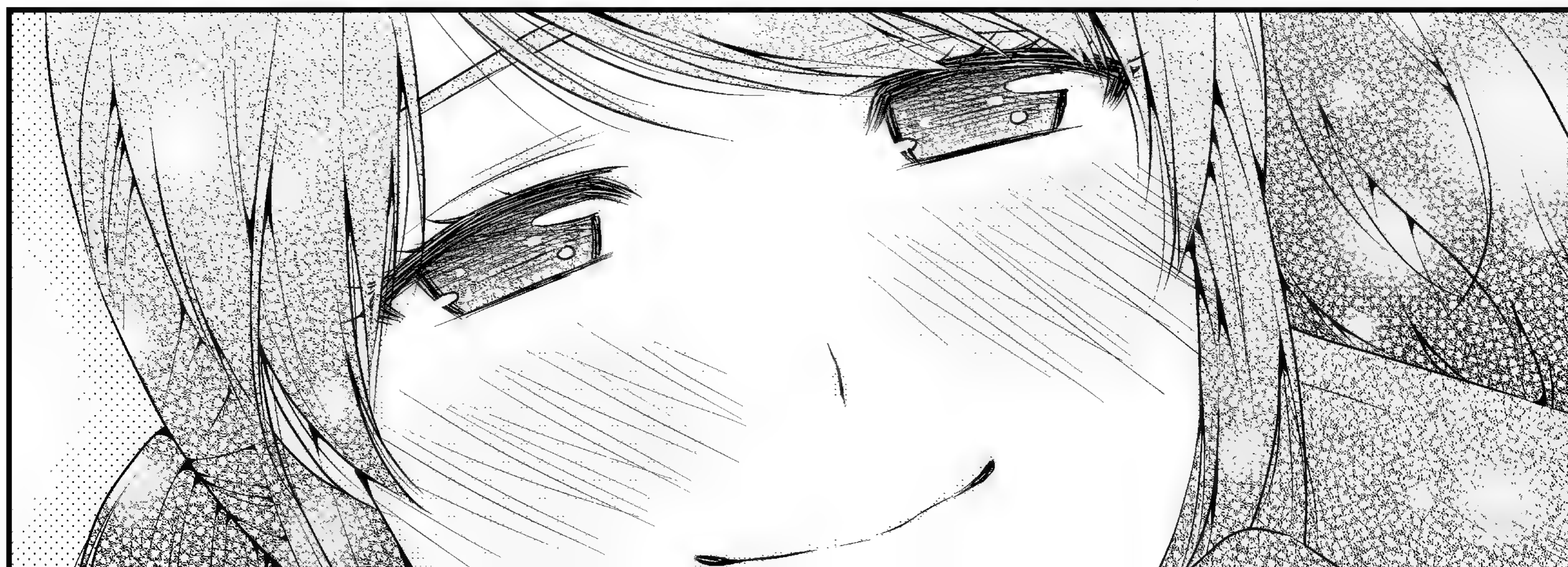


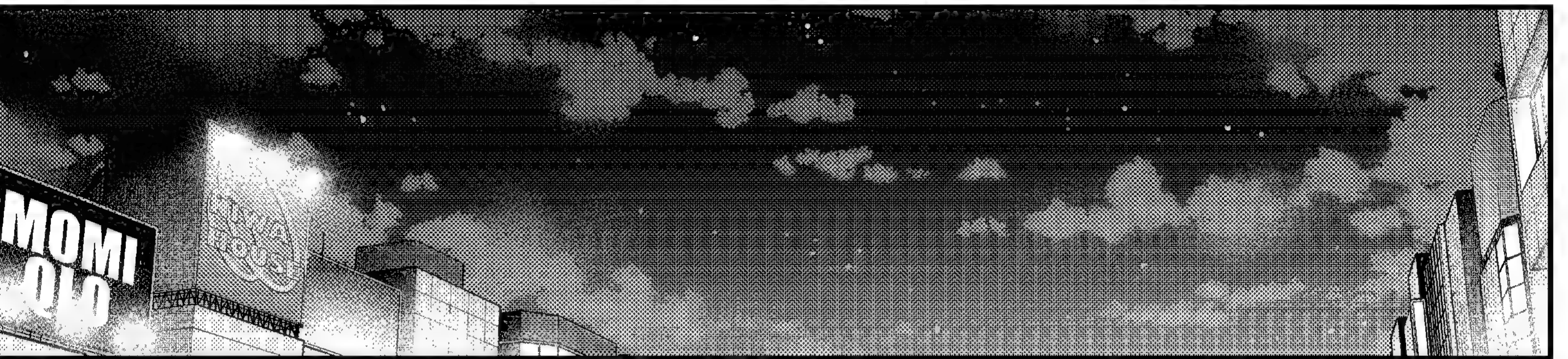
SHE'S BEEN JUGGLING SCALDING CANDY EVERY DAY,

PRACTICING HER HEART OUT...

...ALL SO SHE COULD SURPRISE YOU.

SO, THAT'S WHY...







...to be continued.

Extra Chapter

The Night of the Blizzard



OH.

I READ
SOMEWHERE
THAT IT'S
EASIER TO
CATCH A
COLD IF YOU
SLEEP WITH
CLOTHES
ON.

MAYBE IT'S
BECAUSE I
CAN FEEL
YOUR BODY
HEAT MORE
DIRECTLY.

HUH
...

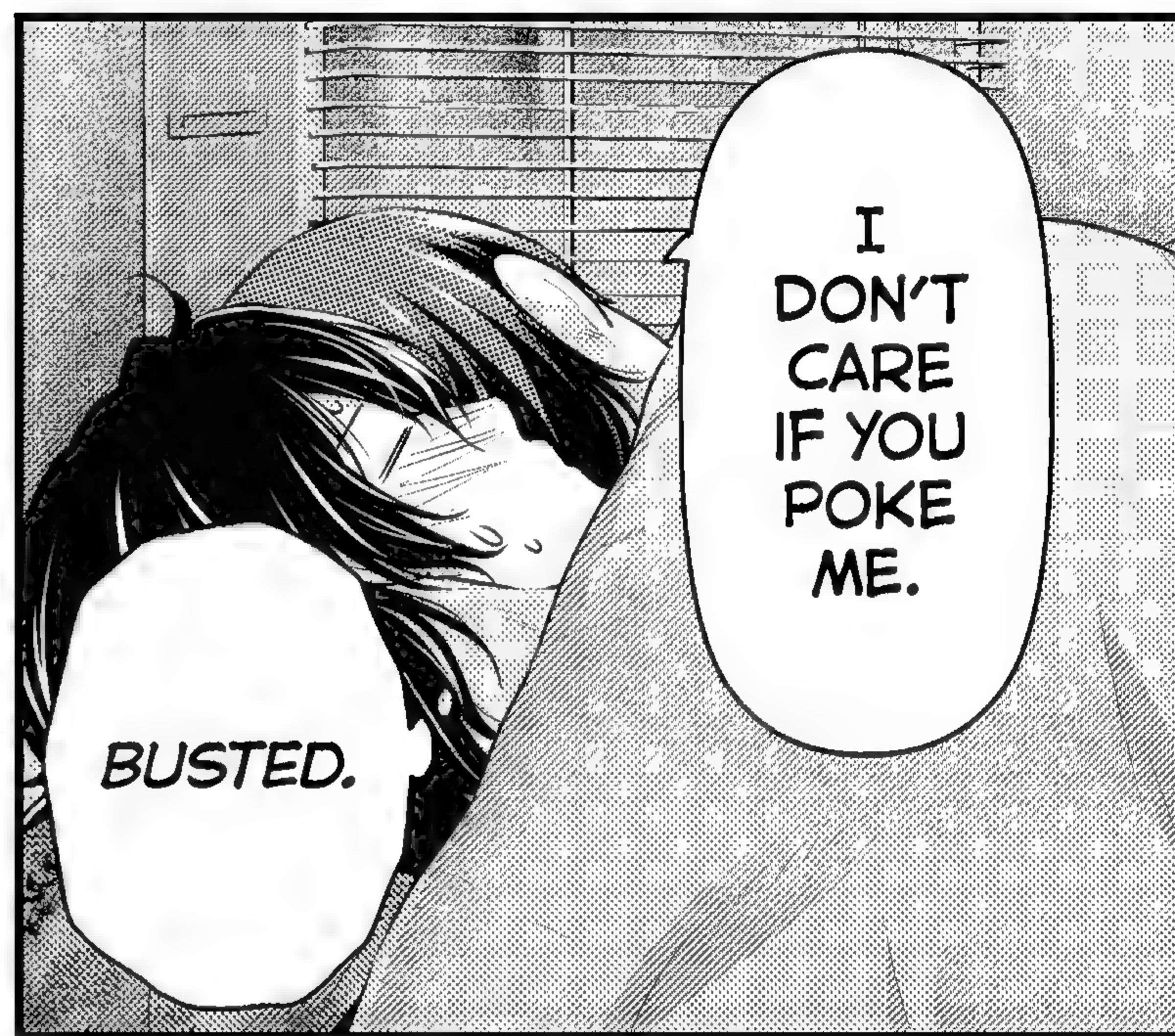


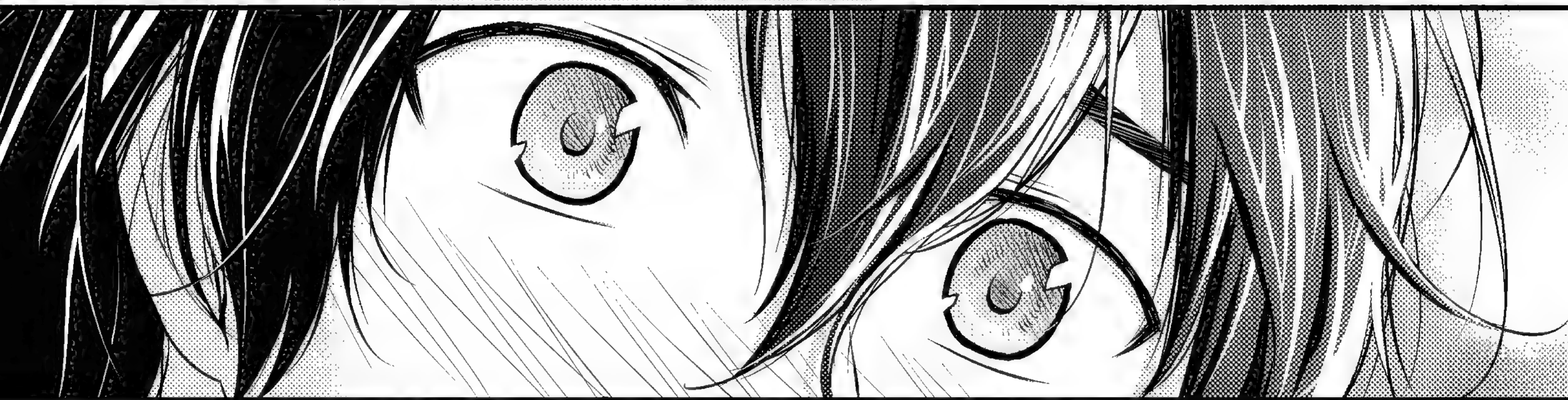
BY
THE
WAY,



YEAH.

I GUESS IT
IS WARMER
WITHOUT MY
YUKATA ON.







...TO DO ANYTHING YOU DON'T WANT TO, EITHER.

BUT I DON'T WANT TO MAKE YOU...

I WANT TO TOUCH YOU SO MUCH I CAN BARELY STAND IT,



SORRY.

THAT'S A LITTLE ROUGH...

HM?

NATSUO ...

IT'S FINE...



TURN AROUND, RUI.



...MAKE ME SAY IT.

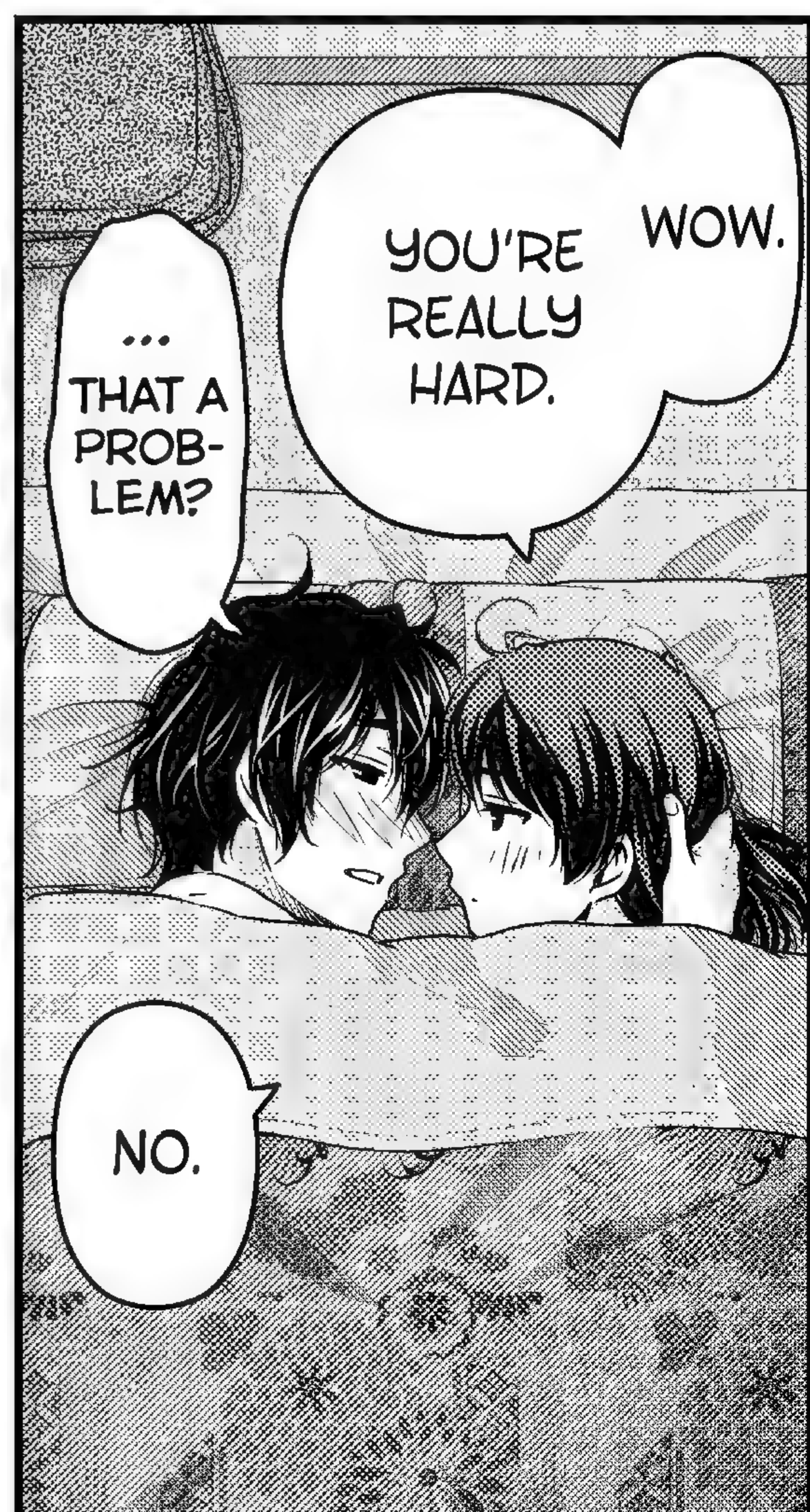
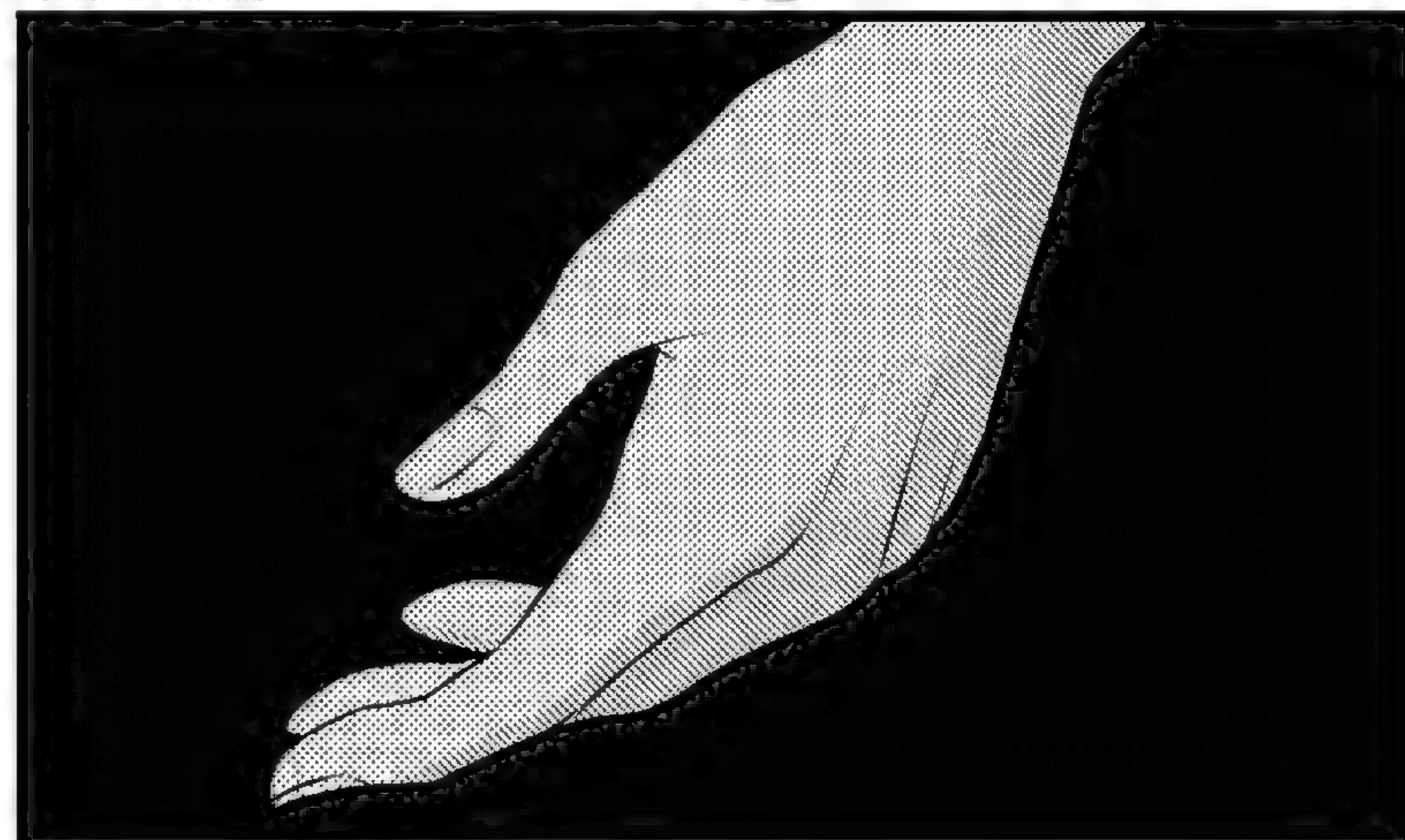
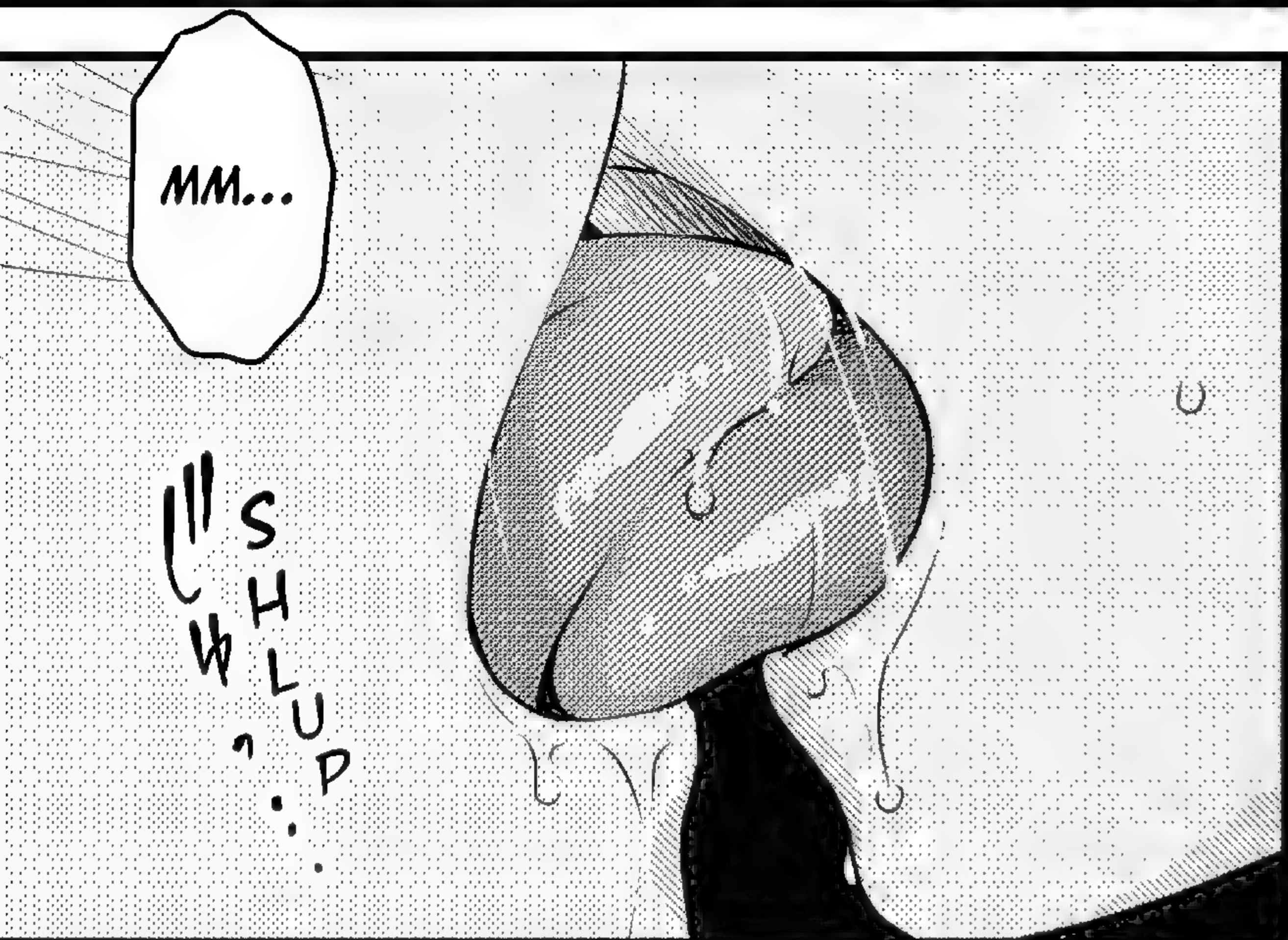
DUM-MY...
...

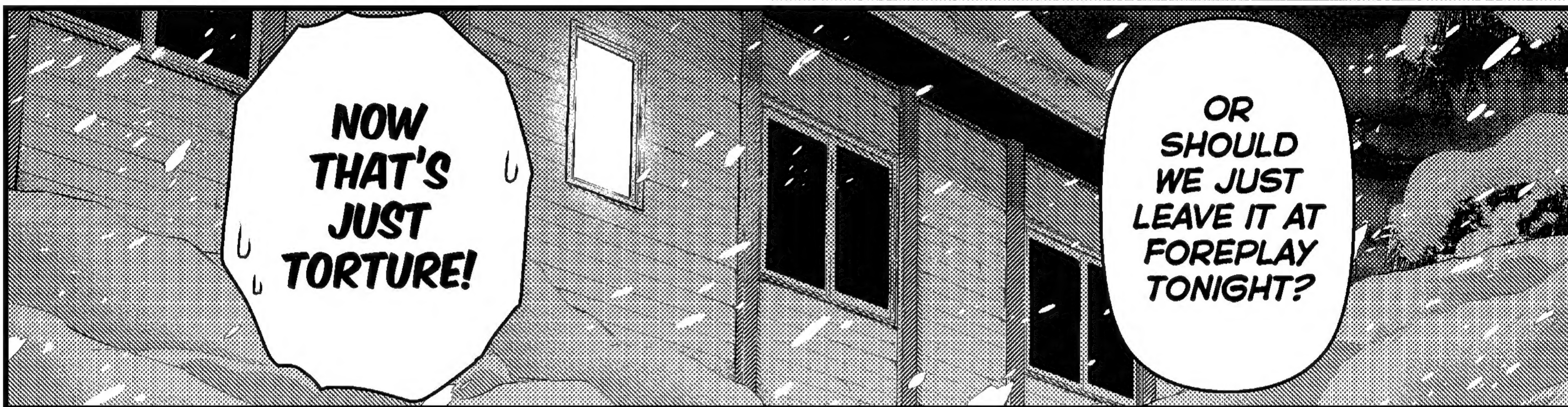
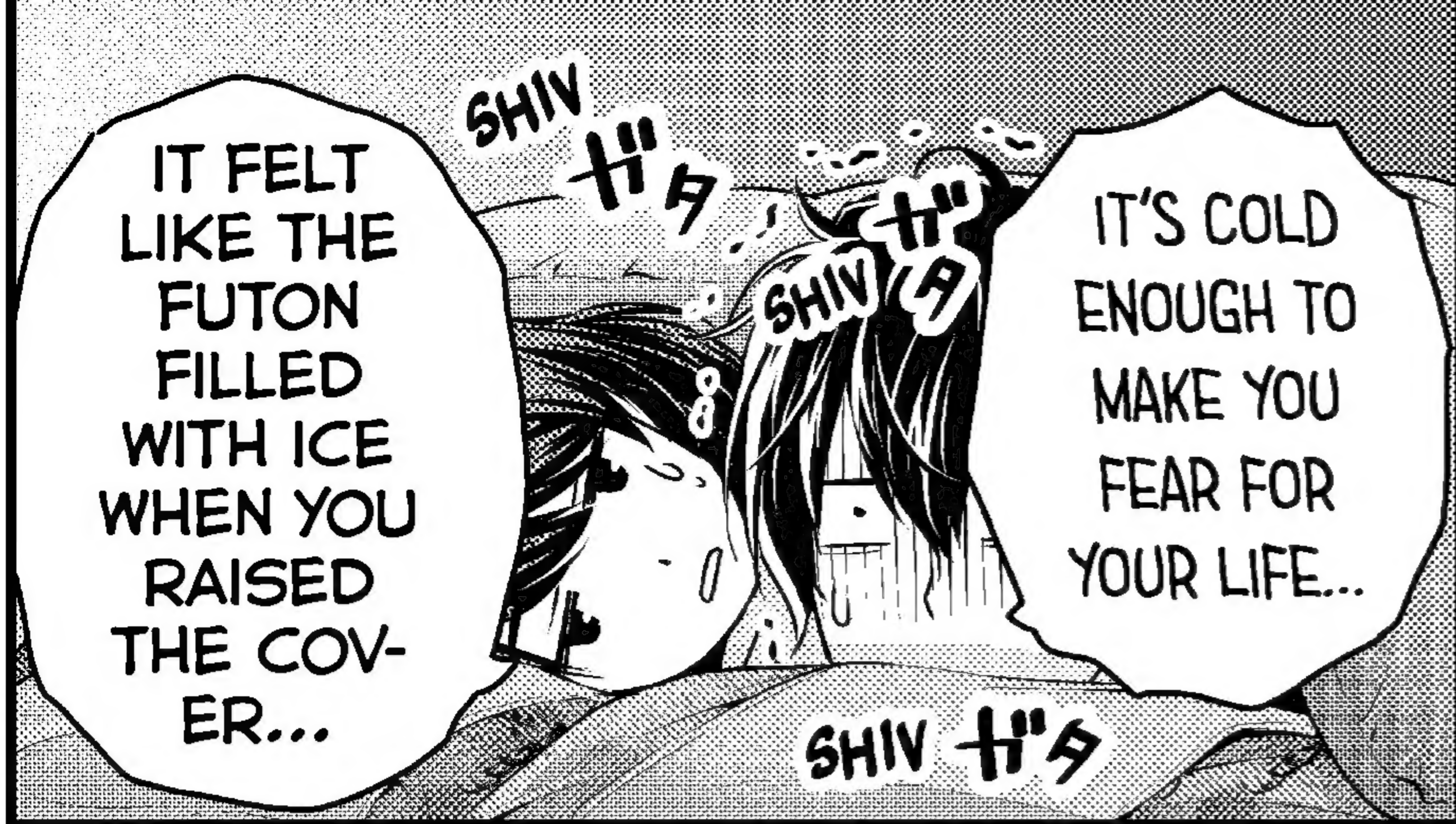
HNN
...



WHAT'S FINE?

YOU MEAN IT FEELS GOOD?





D O M E X G I R L

Preview

A new town, a new encounter.
The season of beginnings arrives.

HE'S
LIVING ON
HIS OWN
STARTING
THIS
SPRING.

WITH NO ONE AROUND
TO GET IN THEIR WAY,
WHAT COULD HAVE
THESE LOVE BIRDS
BLUSHING...? ♡



BEWARE FATED
REUNIONS!
THE COLLEGE
ARC BEGINS
WITH A
KIDNAPPING!

M
R
R
R
F!



CAN
NATSUO
RESIST
TEMPTA-
TION?!



TO BE CONTINUED IN VOLUME 15!

TRANSLATION NOTES



LAUGH MANOR, PAGE 117

Titled *Omoshiro-Sou e Irasshai!* in Japanese, this is a segment on the variety show *KuruKuru Ninety-Nine Hi-Tension TV*, it features up and coming comedic talent on the set of a fictional apartment known as Laugh Manor.

Domestic Girlfriend 14

KODANSHA COMICS Digital Edition

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Editing by Sarah Tilson
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